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ABSTRACT

An ethnographic study of Mexican Americans living in Houston is presented in this monograph. The Mexican American population is studied in regard to such factors as population distribution, culture, socioeconomic background, education, employment, social activities, and environment. The barrio environment is discussed in terms of its setting, people, and the life-style therein. Life in an urban barrio is also described from a child's viewpoint. Additionally, the attitudes and organizations of the Mexican American traditionalists, middle class, and students of high school and college age are discussed. Sketches resulting from field interviews are used throughout the monograph. Ten tables and 5 graphs containing demographic data are appended, as is a 41-item bibliography. (NQ)

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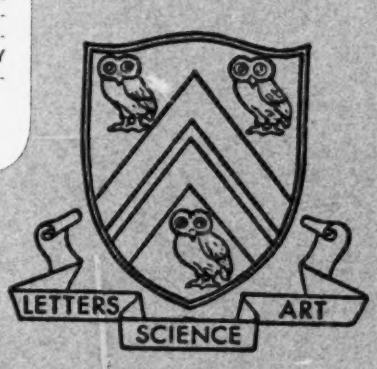

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MONOGRAPH IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN POPULATION OF HOUSTON

A SURVEY IN THE FIELD 1965-1970

MARY ELLEN GOODMAN
with the collaboration of Alma Beman, Don des Jarlais,
Robert S. Guerra, Tatcho D. Mindiola, Susan Parman, and Others

Vol. 57, No. 3 Summer 1971

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VOLUME 57, NUMBER 3 SUMMER 1971

THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN POPULATION OF HOUSTON

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

Rice University Studies is fortunate to have in its series the results of this last research project directed by the late Mary Ellen Goodman. Even though Mrs. Goodman was unable to see the work through to its final written report, the material gathered is of great value to people interested in the important minority problem presented by the Mexican-American population. The decision was therefore made to publish this report even though it lacks the sophisticated analysis and conclusion that undoubtedly would have been added had Mrs. Goodman lived to see the work through.

The field research upon which this report is based began in 1966 with a staff of research assistants, many of whom were bilingual, and much of the data was collected during 1966 and 1967. Field research continued intermittently until February, 1970, several months after Mrs. Goodman's death, and was most actively pursued during the summer months. Among the many research assistants, special thanks are due to Jose de la Isla, who contributed importantly by conducting and supervising field research during its most intensive period, and to Robert S. Guerra and Tatcho D. Mindiola, whose concern with the project included both field research and preparation of this final report. That the preliminary reports (written under the supervision of Mrs. Goodman) and data gathered after their preparation have been brought together in this organized form is primarily due to the guidance of Professor Edward Norbeck of the Department of Anthropology at Rice University. Most of the manuscript was prepared by Robert S. Guerra, Tatcho D. Mindiola, and Susan Parman, but a large number of other people were involved in one way or another in the collecting of the material, collating it, preparing the tables, and writing preliminary reports. It has been impossible to recover the names of all these helpers, but we would like specifically to thank all of the individuals listed below and offer a general vote of thanks to the many whose identities were lost in the confusion following Mrs. Goodman's death.

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In addition to its other contributions to the preparation of this report, the Southwest Center for Urban Research has provided a subvention toward publication.

With the aim of preserving anonymity, fictitious names are used in this account for persons, business concerns, areas of the city such as "El Barrio," city streets, and the like.

K. F. Drew
Editor

FOREWORD

Posthumous publications are often of two types: an unfinished manuscript of the deceased author or personal notes of an autobiographical nature. "The Tree of Culture" by Ralph Linton is an example of the former. This monumental work by one of the world's great anthropologists was published two years after his death on December 24, 1953. His widow, Adelin Linton, a recognized social scientist, was able to complete the book based on the author's notes and the transcription of lecture notes.

Although I have hopes of preparing an autobiographical publication in the future based on my wife's extensive personal notes and photographs, being a physical scientist, I was unable to offer any useful assistance in the compiling and editing of this urban ethnographic study of Mexican-Americans. Instead many of her colleagues and students labored lovingly and long to prepare this research report by Mary Ellen Goodman. Admittedly the book lacks her careful editing and inimitable personal touch. Nevertheless, the conception and major thrust of the work are clearly her own. The planning was completed during the summer of 1965. The interviews, initial compilation, and first draft occupied a substantial amount of her time almost continuously until her death from cancer on August 24, 1969. Only a person of her amazing determination and dedication could have accomplished so much during a year of chem-therapy treatments and physical deterioration. Yet she somehow managed to continue actively in this research, completed another book, "The Culture of Childhood," Teachers College Press of Columbia University (1970), and faithfully fulfilled her teaching and academic administrative responsibilities.

It is most fitting that this book join a series published by Rice University for Rice was an institution Mary Ellen Goodman loved.

February 14, 1971
Houston, Texas

Clark Goodman

CHAPTER I

A DEMOGRAPHIC SKETCH OF HOUSTONIANS WITH SPANISH SURNAMES

At the time this survey was undertaken, no thorough collection of demographic data on Houston had been made since 1960.[1] In the following pages, census figures reported for people with Spanish surnames are assumed to be Mexican-American since most Houstonians with such names are of Mexican ancestry; these figures are furthermore assumed to be complete since few Mexican-Americans have non-Spanish surnames.

Estimates of population growth from 1960 to 1965 have been made by the Houston Chamber of Commerce (1966) and the City Planning Department (1966). A study of a predominantly Mexican-American area of the city was done by the Neighborhood Centers Association (1967).[2]

In an attempt to sketch a valid demographic portrait for 1965, the present authors have made further estimates of other demographic variables. These figures represent essentially linear projections from the 1950 and 1960 data to 1965, corrected on the bases of population growth estimates for 1965 and other factors presumed to have influenced population changes in the period from 1960 to 1965. Estimates have been considered in the perspective of Houston's changing industrial base, which is moving from an essentially raw material and commercial orientation (e.g., oil and shipping) to one that is more technological (e.g., aerospace, petrochemical, and electronics industries). This shift has greatly increased opportunities for government employment and created a much larger demand for white collar workers and skilled technicians.

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1. Unless otherwise specifically noted, the data which follow have been taken from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Population and Housing: 1960 Final Report,* PHC(1), Vol. LXIII, Houston, Texas, SMSA (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962) (particularly Tables P-3 and H-4). 1950 data were taken from *U.S. Census of Population: 1950,* Vol. III, *Census Tract Statistics* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952), Chapter 18.

At the time the 1970 census was conducted, the population of Houston had grown to 1,212,976 people. Approximately 25% (300,000 people) of this total was Negro and approximately 11.5% (140,000 people) Mexican-American. Each year, substantial numbers of Mexican-Americans from South Texas and Negroes from East Texas are reported to migrate to Houston and other cities for better jobs. (The 1970 data were drawn from Vocational Guidance Service, *Career Guidance Through Groups,* July 1, 1969 through August 15, 1970 [Houston, Texas, 1970].—Ed.)

2. See Bibliography for complete citation for works mentioned in the text.

The population of metropolitan Houston (the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes all of Harris County) has grown dramatically since World War II, and the segment of population with Spanish surnames has grown even faster than the general population—from 4.9% in 1950 to an estimated 7.1% in 1965 (Table 1). The large number of Mexican-Americans migrating to Houston accounts in part for the high rate of increase in this category (Table 2).

Available estimates for continued in-migration to Houston do not attempt to predict the demographic characteristics of the different incoming groups. In view of recent trends it seems probable that most of the additions will come from other, though smaller, urban areas. The proportion of in-migrants from rural areas, however, is likely to be higher in the Mexican-American and Negro groups than in the Anglo. Anglo newcomers tend to be better educated and to have significantly higher incomes than their Mexican and Negro counterparts.

A second factor in the increase of Mexican-Americans in Houston is a high birth rate. The estimated rates of natural increase (excess of births over deaths) are 2.5% for the Mexican-American population, and 1.5% for the general population of Houston.

This difference in birth rates is producing a higher dependency ratio (the number of persons 14 years old and under, and 65 and over, per one thousand persons between the ages of 14 and 65) for the Mexican-Americans relative to the total population (Table 3). This ratio serves as a rough indicator of the economic burden of supporting children and the aged which must be assumed by the economically productive members of the group. The large, and increasing, proportion of dependents in the Mexican-American population hinders the group's general economic improvement. In an industrial society, where jobs and income are closely linked with education, a high dependence ratio inhibits intergenerational upward mobility for the simple reason that less money is available per child to pay for the necessary period of education. The Mexican-Americans, as compared with the general population, show a heavy concentration in the age group from birth to age fifteen (Table 4). This distribution is reflected in the striking difference between the median age of the Mexican-American population—18.7 years—and that of the total population of Houston—27.5 years.

The Mexican-American population of Houston had markedly lower incomes than the general population for 1960 (Table 5 and Figure 2) although higher than the incomes of Negroes in the city. Income distribution percentages for 1960 showed 42% of the Negroes, 29% of the Mexican-Americans, and 18% of the Anglos had incomes at or below the poverty level of $3,000 per annum (Table 6). In nine of twenty census tracts with a high incidence of poverty, more than 10% of the residents were Mexican-

Americans (cf. Figures 3 and 1). It is estimated that in 1965, despite rising median incomes and a consequent decrease in the percentage of incomes at or below the poverty level, the income distribution figures for Negroes, Mexican-Americans, and Anglos were 36%, 24%, and 13%, respectively. (The Houston–Harris County Community Action Association employed as its poverty criterion in 1967 a median family income of $4,000 per annum.) Relative to the city population as a whole, the Negroes are making slightly greater gains in income than the Mexican-Americans. Within each of these groups, however, are dense, inner-city enclaves of people for whom the gains in income are barely perceptible.

Unemployment rates for the Spanish-surname population in Houston have been, and continue to be, higher than those of the general population. However, the employment situation for Mexican-American males has improved steadily, with unemployment rates dropping from 6.9% in 1950 to an estimated 4.8% in 1965 (Table 7). Two factors may account for this trend: 1) a general increase in Mexican-Americans' employability from 1950–1960, and 2) general prosperity in the United States as a whole, and Houston in particular, from 1960 to the present. Before 1950, most Mexican-American in-migrants to Houston were from rural areas; by 1960, most were from other urban areas and better suited for employment in Houston.

The percentage of employed Mexican-American females, as well as of males, has been approaching that of the general Houston population (Table 8). This is indicative not only of increased opportunities for employment for Mexican-American females but also of greater acculturation as these women take on the habits and attitudes of their Anglo counterparts. However, a large number of the Mexican-American females in the labor force work only periodically, and domestic or similar service remains a major type of employment for them.

It is estimated that in Houston in 1965 Mexican-Americans, Negroes, and Anglos of 25 years of age and over had completed an average of 7.2, 9.5, and 12.5 years of schooling, respectively (Table 9 and Figure 4). However, the number of school years completed does not necessarily reflect the quality of education. Negroes report a higher median of years of school completed than do people with Spanish surnames, yet the median income of Houston Negroes is below that of Mexican-Americans. Contributing factors may be that the quality of Negro education is poor and that Negroes are discriminated against in employment more often than are Mexican-Americans. Many Mexican-Americans are hampered by language difficulties, however, which may retard their education and thus reduce their prospects of employment in competition with Negroes.

The statistics on juvenile crime in 1966 of the Houston Police Department show that per capita crime rates for Mexican-Americans are between those for Anglos (lowest) and Negroes (highest). High crime and delinquency

rates are associated with poverty elsewhere in the nation regardless of ethnic affiliations. The Selective Service System does not keep records according to race or ethnic group but their statistics nevertheless strongly suggest a correlation between poverty and crime. As a general rule, boards of the Selective Service System administering sectors of Houston with high percentages of Negroes and Mexican-Americans tend to have high proportions of persons in the 4–F category (disqualified on medical, moral, or mental grounds).

Census data provide the evidence that, relative to the total population figures of Houston: 1) the number of dwelling units occupied by Mexican-Americans classified as "deteriorating" (requiring more repairs than normally would be made in one year) is twice as high as the median; and 2) the number of units occupied by Mexican-Americans described as "dilapidated" (dwellings requiring more repairs than are justified by the value of the unit, or dwellings that were below the standard when first built) is also twice as high as the median. The units owned and occupied by Mexican-Americans are worth less than those owned by the general population and, similarly, Mexican-Americans pay lower rents than the general population, live in smaller dwellings, and their dwellings are occupied by a larger number of people.

Inferior housing is, of course, in part a reflection of low income, but the possibility was also considered that practices of discrimination in selling and renting dwellings might be involved. In the following pages, these two factors are considered in a comparison of samples of Mexican-American and Anglo residential areas occupied by people with approximately the same median family incomes. The two sample areas chosen as the most nearly comparable were selected by examination of the city's census tracts. As the 1960 census showed no Anglo tract with a median family income below $4,900, census tract 21 (where 5,225 Anglo residents formed 85% of the population) with a median family income of $4,975 was selected. The tracts with high concentrations of Mexican-Americans had much lower median incomes than the predominantly Anglo tracts and so it was decided to select for comparison a tract with Mexican-Americans of comparable income even though the majority of the people in the tract were Anglos (tract 7A, 2,083 Mexican-American inhabitants composing 17% of the total population, with a median income of $4,809).

As housing data in Table 11 indicate, the ratios of sound, deteriorating, and dilapidated dwellings of the two groups selected are nearly identical. However, the greater median value of owner-occupied units and the greater median rental fees of units in tract 21 strongly suggest that in this predominantly Anglo tract sound dwellings are of better quality. Mexican-American dwellings are larger than those of Anglos but they are more crowded (41% versus 14% occupied by 1.01 or more persons per room). The relatively

high percentage of owner-occupied units in tract 7A suggests that Mexican-America families who can afford to do so tend to buy their dwellings. The choice of areas of the city seems to depend on economic circumstances—they buy what they can afford—and familiarity with the area from residence there as a renter. Information on the effects of practices of discrimination is unclear.

Formal studies of residential distribution in Houston suggest, however, that discrimination in housing does exist. One study by Moore and Mittelbach (1966) includes a quantitative measure of segregation—a "dissimilarity index"—among Anglos, Negroes, and people of Spanish surname for Houston (Table 12). This index (see Taeuber and Taeuber, 1965), arbitrarily scaled from zero (no segregation) to one hundred (complete segregation), measures the extent to which ethnic residential distribution departs from an even pattern in each of a city's residential sectors (usually census tracts). All the segregation scores for Houston are high.

In relation to the incomes of Mexican-Americans as a group, the residents of tract 7A of our sample, with a median income of $4,809, are solidly middle-class. Their housing, however, is on the average inferior to that of the tract 21 residents whose median income, relative to the distribution of Anglo income, ranks them as low middle-class.

As in most American cities, the general residential trend in Houston is away from the central core of the city and toward its outer fringes (see Figure 5). Houston extends over such a large area that most of its suburban growth is actually occurring within the city limits rather than in individually incorporated suburbs. From 1960 to 1965 Houston's population increased by an estimated 20%. Figure 5 reveals that most of the central census tracts have lost population, whereas most of the tracts at the periphery of Houston have gained population at rates greater than 20%.

There are two probable explanations for this general shift. First, the construction of cross-town freeways in densely populated areas forced some central residents to move, and many have moved outside the city's core. Second, as Houston has no zoning ordinances to prevent residential areas from being put to commercial use, the rapid expansion of the central business district has both forced and encouraged abandonment of residences close to the heart of the city. Both freeway and commercial expansions, which primarily affect people in low-income residential areas, i.e., Negroes and Mexican-Americans, have served to shrink these areas in the central core of Houston and to make them less desirable residential sites. A number of the displaced families, however, have chosen to remain within this district, leading to even more crowded living conditions than previously.

The outflow of population from the central core of Houston may also be ascribed to the popularity of suburban living. People of the central city slums who achieve some economic success often move to middle-class

neighborhoods in the outer areas. While there are a few Mexican-Americans in most census tracts and substantial numbers in some of the outer census tracts (see Figure 1), Mexican-Americans account for as much as ten percent of the population in only 28 of the city's 146 tracts.

It is difficult to predict population trends and their effect on an ethnic community. In Houston, however, certain trends seem likely in view of the continued economic growth. Expansion of the central business district will doubtless continue, with residential structures in the central area of the city declining in number, if not in quality. However, current determined efforts by The Advisory Committee on Housing of the City of Houston—notably, to enact a city Housing Code and to develop a nonprofit Housing Development Corporation to provide more housing for low-income families—may greatly change the outlook.

Economic growth, combined with declining prejudices and expanding employment opportunities, should speed the rise in incomes of Mexican-Americans. As their incomes rise, it is probable that many will move to middle-class Anglo neighborhoods in the outer areas, thus enhancing their opportunities for assimilation and acceptance. They possibly may not, however, break their ties with their ethnic community at large.

Another, and probably larger, group of Mexican-Americans will be economically able to leave the central area of Houston but will choose to move into peripheral areas which are already heavily Mexican-American. It is likely that such neighborhoods, with housing provided by both new construction and the departure of Anglos, will become still larger and more solidly Mexican-American.

A third group of Mexican-Americans, perhaps thirty to forty percent of the population with Spanish surnames, probably will not achieve either social or physical mobility. For these people, left behind in the central city, the "culture of poverty" that is already so familiar to many Mexican-Americans will likely be self-perpetuating.

DIVERSITY

A conventional statistical picture of the Mexican-Americans in Houston is a composite which neglects certain kinds of variability in both individuals and groups. In the present investigation, three major social categories were identified: a small group of traditionalists, a large group of the middle class, and a still larger group of poor Mexican-Americans. All three groups are discussed in subsequent chapters although the last category was studied most intensively. There are, however, still other identifiable categories of people within the Mexican-American population of Houston. A kaleidoscopic array of life styles is evident. Values and attitudes vary, as do language skills, degree of participation in political and other common-interest associa-

tions, and amount and kind of education and vocational training. In the following pages some of this diversity is mapped, giving greatest attention to the three major categories described above.

Major Social Categories

The Traditionalists

Traditionalists are persons of late middle age or older who are regarded by much of the Mexican-American community, and by one another, as constituting a social elite. Their economic condition is often modest and their formal education negligible, but they are highly respected. They practice many of the traditional Mexican customs, voice traditional beliefs, and are reluctant to associate with Anglos.

The Middle Class

The middle class lack many traditionally Mexican characteristics and they participate extensively in Anglo institutions and activities. English is often the preferred language and marriage with Anglos is not uncommon. Participation in political organizations is a hallmark of the middle class in general; it is primarily as a result of middle-class efforts that Mexican-American organizations with political and civic concerns have grown both in size and effectiveness (cf. Rubel, 1966). This contrasts with the common-interest associations of the traditionalists in which social functions predominate.

The Poor

The poor live in relatively isolated enclaves within the city. One such enclave or "urban village," El Barrio, was studied in depth. To some extent the concept of "culture of poverty" is useful in describing this group of people: the horizons of the poor are narrow and life is geared toward moment-to-moment satisfaction. This group is more isolated from the larger society than are the other two groups and consequently tends to cling to traditional Mexican customs, attitudes, and beliefs. There is almost no participation in any common-interest association except church-sponsored organizations. Upward mobility is possible and, in fact, many members of the middle class come from lower-class areas of the city.

Comparison of Modal Men: Barrio and Non-Barrio

A wide range of information on background, family life, attitudes, and so on, was gathered by interviews with Mexican-American informants. These were divided into two categories: 1) Barrio and 2) "non-Barrio," i.e., traditionalists and middle class.

If multidimensional portraits of these two samples are drawn, the resulting composite pictures do not resemble any one individual. Response percentages are distributed along the various codes assigned for each question; a profile of the "modal man" would necessarily consist of lines drawn

between the codes having the highest percentages in each dimension. The real individuals whose life histories and family sketches are described in subsequent chapters have unique profiles; they fill in the skeletal outline of the modal man with the pale flesh-and-blood detail.

In the following pages, the results of the interview schedule are presented by depicting two "modal men" called Sergio and Juan with attributes derived from the most commonly given responses. The percentage of actual persons who responded to a given question is placed in parentheses. When more than one response to a question was obtained frequently, another modal man (a "neighbor" of Sergio and Juan) is introduced.

The Modal Man of El Barrio. Sergio Casanova is over 44 years of age (64%). He was born in South Texas (56%) and has spent most of his life in Houston (47%). His neighbor, Felipe, spent most of his life in South Texas before coming to Houston (31%).

Sergio's parents were born in Mexico (56%); his mother (47%) and father (33%) now live in Houston, and he has no relatives living in Mexico (50%). Felipe, on the other hand, does have relatives in Mexico (39%); his father (28%) still lives there, as do various aunts, uncles, and first cousins (19%). However, he never visits them (31%) and they never come to see him. Most of the residents of El Barrio have relatives living in the Houston area (78%), but not in the local neighborhood (75%).

Sergio (81%) and his wife (47%) have not had more than eight years of schooling, most of it in Houston (30%). Sergio does not know how much schooling his father received (75%). He, like his father, is an unskilled worker (44%), whereas Felipe, who represents in part another mode, is a semiskilled worker (38%); both have had a variety of jobs during their lifetimes. Sergio earns between $2,000 and $3,000 a year (25%); Felipe's income is $5,000 to $8,000 (14%). Sergio feels that he lives in a poor neighborhood (25%) and is himself "pobre" (poor) (30%).

When asked what kind of a job he would like if he possessed the training and skills, Sergio names a semiskilled job (36%); some of his friends (17%) mention unskilled occupations. Sergio hopes his son will have a well-paid position when he is about 30 (14%) as a skilled workman (30%). He would like his son to finish high school (19%); some of Sergio's neighbors feel that their sons should receive as much education as possible (19%).

Many of Sergio's neighbors list Catholicism as their religious preference (75%), but only 58% call themselves Catholic. Barrio residents consider themselves inactive with respect to religious organizations (61%), but they believe it is important for their children to receive religious training (78%).

Sergio feels that he was brought up too strictly (47%) and is raising his own children more leniently (31%). Anglo children, he thinks, are not brought up as strictly as Mexican-American children (33%). His conception of a well-trained child is tradition-oriented (45%); that is, the child shows

respect for elders, follows their example, recognizes the father's authority, contributes money and other help to the household, and is obedient and close to the parents.

Sergio's mother was an important influence in family decisions when he was a child (28%); he feels that, in comparison, his wife has less influence (28%). Felipe, however, thinks his wife has about the same authority that his mother had (25%). Many residents of El Barrio consider both themselves and their wives to be heads of the household (53%), although some (31%) emphasize the male's role in this regard.

Sergio would like his daughter to marry a hard-working boy who is able to support her (15%), is fairly well educated (31%), and is his daughter's own choice (10%). She need not necessarily marry someone of Mexican descent (33%). Sergio thinks it is a good idea for girls to have a job before marriage (56%); he also feels that it is acceptable for women to continue working after marriage (33%). Felipe, however, thinks a girl should not work after she marries (31%).

In Sergio Casanova's home, both English and Spanish are spoken (39%), whereas in some of the Barrio homes only Spanish is spoken (28%). Sergio enjoys both English and Spanish radio programs (31%), although other persons in the neighborhood prefer only the former (28%) and others only the latter (22%). Sergio prefers English movies (25%).

Sergio has no desire to move to Mexico (72%), and feels that Mexican-Americans should become naturalized citizens of the United States (69%) because of the economic, educational, and other advantages citizenship provides (47%). He does not observe Mexican national holidays (53%) as do some of his neighbors (25%).

Sergio sees no important differences between Anglos and Mexican-Americans (29%), but feels that the latter are generally paid lower salaries than the former (50%), and that Spanish-speaking people must work harder than Anglos to "get ahead" (61%). He considers the scarcity of Mexican-American professionals such as lawyers and doctors as due to lack of education (33%) and limited income (20%), but believes that this will change for the better in the future (40%).

Sergio and Felipe have had some experience with Negroes in the neighborhood (58%); Sergio outwardly expresses positive sentiments toward them (32%), and Felipe has a few negative comments to make (21%). Sergio has worked on jobs with Negroes (53%), but has never belonged to Negro-affiliated unions (36%); he has never attended school with Negroes (47%) or participated in activities of the church or other organizations with them (58%).

Sergio never entertains his neighbors (44%); Felipe talks and socializes with them (26%). Sergio says he has no *compadres* in the neighborhood (72%) or in the Houston area (50%). Felipe has one *compadre* in the neigh-

borhood (17%) and says he also has a few in other parts of Houston (47%); he names one (28%) whereas some of his neighbors list two or three (17%). When asked who had been most helpful in solving his personal problems, Sergio could think of no one (21%); Felipe named his mother (11%).

Sergio has not served in the armed services (78%). He does not belong to a union (64%) or to any other similar organization (54%). He owns a radio (75%) and a television set (72%) which afford him his favorite pastimes (48%). He estimates that he spends one to three hours daily watching television (31%). He also enjoys working around the house (20%). He subscribes to a daily newspaper (44%), which Felipe does not do (36%), but not to magazines (30%). He has a phone (42%), but many of his neighbors do not (42%).

The main problems that worry Sergio involve his family (30%), his health (18%), and his financial situation (16%); he does not concern himself with large-scale problems relating to the world or mankind. Much like his parents before him, Sergio has little (25%) or no (28%) interest in politics; he does not involve himself in political activities, does not donate money to political causes or organizations (67%), and does not discuss political topics with his friends (58%). He is not registered to vote (44%), and has not tried to persuade others to register (64%). He sometimes feels that the Anglos run the city (19%).

The Non-Barrio Modal Man. Juan Mendez may live anywhere in the Houston area. He is over 44 years of age (40%), but a fairly large number of his friends are between 35 and 39 years old (28%). Both he (50%) and his wife (52%) were born in Texas but not in Houston, whereas his neighbor, Francisco, is a native Houstonian (28%). Juan's parents were born in Mexico (69%).

Juan has served in the United States Armed Forces (54%). He boasts a B.A. or higher degree (30%), whereas Francisco has only a high school diploma (28%). Juan went to school in Houston (51%), although many of his college friends attended educational institutions in other cities (33%) such as the University of Texas in Austin.

Juan's wife has finished high school (26%) and she knows other wives who have received some college education (23%). Juan's father did not acquire as much education as his son; the elder Mendez probably did not complete more than eight years of schooling (29%). Francisco does not know how much education his father received (26%).

Juan's father was a semiskilled worker (45%); Francisco's was unskilled (30%). Juan himself is a white collar worker (28%); many of his friends are either professionals (26%) or semiskilled workers (26%). Juan earns between $5,000 and $8,000 a year (28%), although some of his friends make more than that. The non-Barrio men usually work for someone else (70%); some of the wives of this group hold semiskilled jobs (31%).

Juan is Catholic and is an active member in his church (50%) and other community organizations. He feels, like Sergio, that Mexican-Americans receive lower wages than Anglos (45%) and that the former must work harder than the latter in order to "get ahead" (42%). Although Juan does not belong to a labor union (78%), he believes that unions do benefit Mexican-Americans by ensuring better working conditions, wages, and so on (78%).

When asked why there are so few Mexican-American professionals, Juan replied that this was due to the limited income of the parents (34%). Francisco believes that it is more likely a lack of education (27%). Both Juan and Francisco (82%) agree, however, that this situation will be better in the future. They expect their sons (47%) and daughters (42%) to finish college. Juan hopes his son will be a professional, and much dislikes the idea of his son's becoming an unskilled worker.

Juan believes that he was brought up "just right" by his parents and that he is raising his children similarly (42%), or perhaps somewhat more leniently (30%). Juan has the impression that the upbringing of Anglo children is not so strict as that of Mexican-American children (52%). He believes that his mother had a good deal of influence in important family decisions when he was a child (49%); he feels, however, that his wife has less such influence (30%).

Juan usually speaks English at home (46%) and at work (71%), but would like his children to speak both languages (42%). With his friends, he usually speaks English (45%) or a mixture of Spanish and English (45%). He listens to radio programs in both languages (59%), but prefers English radio stations (26%) and television programs (52%). He usually watches television in the evening for one to three hours (54%).

Juan reads a daily newspaper (88%) and subscribes to several leading magazines (43%). He seldom reads the local Spanish-English newspaper, *El Sol* (45%). He likes to read or work around the house in his spare time (29%), although his participation in organizations such as LULAC (League of United Latin-American Citizens) and PASO (Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations) occupies some of his leisure hours (29%). He worries more about the welfare of his family (33%) than about anything else, and he says that his wife is the most helpful individual in dealing with his personal problems.

Juan frequently discusses politics with his friends (73%) and actively participates in local elections, if only by voting (71%). He believes that the Mexican-Americans should not vote as a group for a certain candidate (45%) because each individual is entitled to his own opinion. He is registered to vote (88%) and has tried to persuade others to register (73%). He generally has an intense interest in politics (47%) and he occasionally contributes money to political organizations (50%). His parents (42%) were much less

active in politics than he is. Juan considers himself to be middle class (62%), on a par with the rest of the neighborhood (46%) and his fellow Anglos (55%). Juan prefers to be called "Mexican-American" by Anglos (32%) and other Mexican-Americans (22%), or simply "Mexican" (20%).

Comparison of Barrio and Non-Barrio Modal Men.[1] Sergio Casanova lives in El Barrio, whereas Juan Mendez may live anywhere in Houston. Both Sergio and Juan are 44 years of age or older (51%). Both were born in Texas, but outside Houston, probably in a small South Texas town (53%); their wives were also generally born in parts of Texas other than Houston. Their fathers (63%) and mothers (56%) were born in Mexico. Both Sergio and Juan are Catholics and believe it is important that their children receive a religious education. In other matters Sergio and Juan are less similar or markedly different. Sergio is much less active in common-interest associations (61% do not belong to such organizations) than Juan (50%).

Sergio did not serve in the armed forces (78%), whereas Juan did (54%). Sergio, who acquired his education outside Houston (30%), completed less than eight years of school (81%) whereas Juan attended Houston schools (51%) and managed to acquire a high school diploma or possibly a B.A. degree (30%). Sergio's wife also received less than eight years of schooling (47%); Juan's wife either finished high school (26%) or attended college for a few years or more (23%). Sergio does not know how much education his father received (75%), but Juan remembers that his father attended school for about eight years (59%).

Sergio works as an unskilled laborer (44%) or semiskilled laborer (38%). Juan and his non-Barrio neighbors are white collar workers (38%), semiskilled workers (26%), or they are in professional occupations (26%). Sergio and Juan annually earn, respectively, $3,000 to $5,000 (25%) and approximately $8,000 (28%).

Juan (73%), unlike Sergio (19%), enjoys discussing politics. Only 33% of Sergio's friends are registered to vote, and only 28% bother to do so. Eighty-eight percent of Juan's friends are registered, and 71% vote in local elections. Both Sergio (31%) and Juan (45%) believe that Mexican-Americans should not vote as a group because each individual is entitled to his own opinion (24%). Sergio, however, does not try to persuade others to vote (80%), does not involve himself in political activity (60%) or contribute to any political organization (30%), and has little or no interest in politics (53%). Juan takes some interest (33%) or much interest (47%) in politics. He frequently discusses politics with his friends (73%), has registered to

1. In the following paragraph, many of the percentages in parentheses refer to both groups combined.

vote (88%), and attempts to persuade others to vote (73%), takes part in political activities (42%), and occasionally contributes money for such activities (50%).

Both modal men are employed by someone else (61%). Sergio's father was an unskilled laborer and Juan's was semiskilled. Both Sergio and Juan believe that Mexican-Americans receive lower wages (47%) and must work much harder than Anglos to get ahead (68%). Although neither belongs to a union (72%), both believe that labor unions can benefit the Mexican-American (54%).

When asked why there are so few Mexican-American professionals, Sergio mentions lack of education and Juan speaks of limited income, but both believe that there will be more Mexican-American professionals in the future (64%).

Sergio wants his son to receive as much education as possible or, at least, to finish high school (38%), though he is not too specific as to what he hopes his son's employment will be. Juan expects his son to receive a B.A. degree (47%) and become a professional (52%). Both agree that their sons should not be unskilled laborers working *al pico y pala* (as ditch diggers) (37%).

Both modal men enjoy living in their respective communities (70%) and this enjoyment may be because of the other people who live there (21%). They have no intention of moving to Mexico (65%) and believe that it is advantageous for Mexican nationals living in the United States to become citizens. Juan and Sergio occasionally observe Mexican national holidays (57%). Most of their neighbors are Mexican-Americans (63%), and they and their neighbors sometimes (Juan 52%, Sergio 31%) entertain each other, mostly by getting together and talking. Although Sergio tends to dislike Negroes or to see them as a threat, Juan has had pleasant experiences with Negroes (55%).

Juan speaks English at home (46%) and at work (36%); Sergio speaks English and Spanish (39%) or just Spanish (28%). Sergio and Juan want their children to speak both languages. The average time that both watch television is one to three hours a day. Sergio seldom reads a daily newspaper (44%) or a magazine (30%), whereas Juan often does both (88% and 50%).

The modal men worry about their families (32%) or about money (13%) and health (12%). Juan feels that his wife has helped him more than anyone else in dealing with his personal problems (51%), while Sergio can name no one in particular in this regard (21%). Sergio sees himself as a member of the poor class (30%) and considers his neighbors to be the same (25%); Juan identifies himself (62%) and his neighbors (46%) as middle class. Both modal men possess a car (71%), a phone (68%), a radio (85%), and a television set (82%).

OTHER MEXICAN-AMERICANS

The many distinguishable types of Mexican-Americans encountered in the course of the present study have been labeled as poor, middle class, traditional, and marginal. Although these categories incorporate the majority of the Mexican-American population of Houston, some groups may be defined by other criteria. Two such groups are the professional and skilled or semiskilled Mexican-Americans and the Mexican nationals who have only recently moved into the Houston area and who therefore have little or no communication with or knowledge of the rest of the Mexican-American community.

Many of the Mexican-American professionals are college graduates who remained in Houston after receiving degrees from one of the city's colleges and universities; the University of Houston, in particular, has attracted a fairly large Mexican-American student body, especially after it became a state-supported institution. Other Mexican-American professionals were drawn to Houston from other parts of Texas by the numerous opportunities for employment in the city. Mexican-American professionals of both these groups have moved into almost every occupational field open to college graduates in an urban area; they have become teachers, computer programmers, accountants, architects, lawyers, doctors, social workers, businessmen—the list is lengthy.

Employment as barbers, technicians, machinists, mechanics, electricians, and other similar positions have been the occupational roles filled by the sizable portion of skilled Mexican-Americans in Houston, whereas the semiskilled Mexican-Americans who come to Houston work as salespeople, clerks, and in other similar positions requiring a fairly good knowledge of English and a certain degree of acculturation. Unskilled Mexican-Americans usually find employment as laborers in construction work, which requires no particular skills and little knowledge of English. Most Mexican nationals choose this type of work.

The Mexican-Americans in these several categories vary widely in education, training, degree of acculturation, outlook, and attitudes. How they interpret the Mexican-American's relationship to the Houston ethic community and the community as a whole may therefore also vary considerably. Many of the in-migrants to Houston come from towns in southern Texas such as Brownsville, McAllen, Harlingen, Laredo, and other smaller communities southeast of San Antonio. These newcomers generally operate in small and lonely worlds composed of close relatives and friends. The unskilled Mexican-American, or the Mexican national in particular, is relatively detached from the rest of the community; the little free time he might have available for social mingling is spent visiting his family, which has usually remained behind in his home town since his step to

Houston is ordinarily temporary. Mexican nationals generally work in Houston for only a few months, thereby earning enough money to support themselves in their native community for the rest of the year. A few bring their families with them, and it is these people who eventually settle in Houston, although adjustment to the new conditions of living may be long and difficult for them because of problems of language and acculturation.

In contrast, semiskilled or skilled Mexican-Americans, who have less difficulty finding employment in Houston, are more likely to bring their immediate families with them and remain in the city permanently. Other relatives may also accompany them or join them later in Houston in hopes of obtaining lucrative employment. Such relatives may at first live with their Houstonian kin and later move to another location, usually in the same vicinity. Such family groups form a community within a community in which primary social interactions are with the immediate family and old friends. In some instances, individuals of these family communities may all work at the same place under the same boss, who often feels that he has found a source of steady, hardworking, and usually dependable employees.

The more highly skilled and professional Mexican-Americans come to Houston for much the same reason as their semiskilled and skilled counterparts: to take advantage of the more varied and lucrative opportunities for employment which a large urban area affords. Accounting, engineering, teaching, and other occupations offer these skilled and professional Mexican-Americans better salaries than are available in southern Texas, where such professions have lower market values because of lack of sufficient business and industry to support them.

Many Mexican-Americans in this category come to Houston to receive a university education. Of those who obtain degrees, many remain in the city to work; those who drop out of college encounter little difficulty in finding employment. In both cases, the various advantages offered by a large city are strong incentives to remain in Houston. In addition to higher incomes, the availability of commercial entertainment appears to have been a prime attraction for these newcomers, although its importance tends to dwindle with time as they begin to interact socially with other Mexican-Americans like themselves. As a general rule, as length of residency increases, so does degree of social interaction outside the boundaries of kinship.

The primary contacts of the Mexican-Americans in highly skilled and professional occupations are with Anglos and other Mexican-Americans of similar social and occupational positions, though they may also associate with old acquaintances from their original communities. (Lawyers are an exception to this rule.)

Mexican-Americans who have recently come to Houston from southern

Texas generally consider Houstonians of Mexican ancestry to be somewhat different from themselves in such matters as values, education, lifestyles, and sometimes even in language. Recent Mexican-American arrivals to Houston usually have a fluent command of Spanish, although sometimes it is of the "Tex-Mex" variety, and they may be surprised to learn that some Houstonians of Mexican ancestry do not even understand, much less speak, Spanish. Mexican-Americans native to Houston are much more fluent in English than are newcomers from southern Texas who are accustomed to speaking Spanish everywhere except in the classroom. Even professional people from that region tend to speak more Spanish than English and have slight accents when speaking English.

Mexican-Americans coming from southern Texas, where authoritarian family structure is still quite prevalent, detect a more egalitarian attitude among the younger generation of Houstonian Mexican-Americans. This they attribute in part to the fast-moving urban existence, as compared with life in rural areas of southern Texas. However, this appears to be only the newcomers' impression; in actuality, the difference between Houston and south Texas in this regard is probably slight.

It is increasingly difficult to label or categorize the Mexican-American population of Houston because of its great and growing diversity. Differences in such matters as values and attitudes, language skills, educational levels, and political participation make stereotyping difficult. Other factors which contribute to the heterogeneity of the Mexican-American population are the urban-rural dichotomy, differences in social class, and differences in rates of acculturation and in length of residency in the country, state, or city.

Although this chapter has stressed the diversity of the Mexican-American population, certain intragroup similarities are much in evidence. The following chapters describe and analyze the three major social categories distinguished earlier and attempt to place these differences and similarities in appropriate perspective by presenting a balanced picture of the Mexican-American population of Houston.

CHAPTER II

EL BARRIO

The Setting and Personnel

The Setting

In Spanish, *barrio* means "neighborhood"; to Houstonians of Mexican ancestry its English synonym is "ward," a word derived from decades past when Houston was divided into six political units. Although its Mexican-American inhabitants identify the *barrio* by its ward number, the neighborhood is a smaller entity than the whole political unit; specifically, it is the Mexican-American section of the ward. The neighborhood referred to here as El Barrio is one such section and, to some extent, its residents consider themselves different from Mexican-Americans of other *barrios* in other wards.

El Barrio is in an old section of Houston; the surviving structures date to the turn of the century. Previously, Irish, Italian, and some Jewish people populated the area, many of whom later became successful and prominent in business and commercial enterprises in the city. A number of Mexican-Americans, who likewise have been successful in professions, business, or civic organizations, grew up in El Barrio. However, the primarily residential portion of the neighborhood was cleared a few years ago for highway construction, reducing El Barrio to eight city blocks, most of which serve as warehouse and business, as well as residential sites.

El Barrio is close to Houston's downtown area, but in social distance it is far removed. It is a natural neighborhood, a kind of "urban village" reminiscent of the Italian-American community of Boston described by Herbert Gans (1962) in his well-known study. The neighborhood is bounded by physical barriers such as a railroad yard, warehouses, small manufacturing companies, and a bayou. Its village atmosphere springs from this physical unity, the small population (some fifty families plus partial families and detached individuals), and the dense tangle of primary relationships among its residents. As highway construction forced some Barrio residents to relocate, many moved to a Mexican-American area to the north, but they still maintain ties with relatives and friends in El Barrio and with the neighborhood Catholic church. Even though the Mexican-American area to the north is part of the same ward as El Barrio, the area's residents are considered by members of El Barrio to belong to a different group.

Ryan Avenue is the main thoroughfare through El Barrio. Located along the avenue's eastern extension are warehouses, manufacturing companies,

and large and small businesses which separate El Barrio from an adjoining Negro "urban village." Closer to the heart of the Negro area, there is a higher concentration of small businesses, lounges, dry goods stores, barber shops, and shine parlors. Men and women crowd the sidewalks, talking loudly and sometimes dancing and making merry. Drinking, occasional acts of violence, and sexual solicitation are commonplace.

The fire station in El Barrio answers a large number of calls in the nearby Negro neighborhood. In April 1966 the station answered 115 calls; in May, 83; and in the first week of June, 31. An Anglo fireman at the station estimates that about 75% of the calls are false alarms and the actual fires are "mostly small fires, matches fires, things of that sort. Right in this particular area close to us [El Barrio] we don't have many." The fireman nostalgically recalls: "When I first came here this whole neighborhood was full of houses. The mommas would send their kids here on Saturdays while they went to the store. On New Year's Eve the mommas would send eight to twelve dozen tamales for us. They knew us. All the kids used to live here at the fire station. When I first came here, the colored people just wasn't there."

In recent years a few Negro families and detached individuals moved into El Barrio. They occupied an apartment building on Ryan Avenue and three houses in the neighborhood, but the landlords vacated and remodelled the apartment building, thereafter renting only to Anglos and Mexican-Americans. Negroes from both inside and outside El Barrio patronize Konnie's Cafe on Ryan Avenue and the Negro-operated bar across from the cafe. There is no policy of segregation in Konnie's; a sign reading "colored cafe," which once divided the building in half, has been removed. Anglos and Mexican-Americans, however, still gravitate to one side of the cafe and Negroes to the other.

As in an actual village, El Barrio has its own business section composed of bars, cafes, and small groceries. The village analogy, however, has its limitations. Barrio residents go outside their "village" to work, visit relatives and friends, make major purchases, and seek recreation and adventure. Outsiders come into El Barrio to make deliveries to the grocery store, the four cafes, and the taxidance lounge, or to eat and drink at the cafes and bars; others come "looking for action."

Persons who interact in El Barrio can be divided into two categories, "outsiders" and "insiders," although the Barrio residents themselves do not necessarily draw such sharp distinctions. Such a division, however, is of heuristic value in analyzing the relationship between a small neighborhood and a larger ethnic community.

The Outsiders

Employees in the area. Men and women who work in the warehouses

and small manufacturing companies in the neighborhood and its surrounding area frequent the cafes and bars of El Barrio around the noon hour and at the end of the working day. Workers at the railroad yard usually go to Konnie's Cafe or Byrd's for lunch. Byrd's previously extended credit to these men and enjoyed a vast business until this policy was revoked. Men from the railroad yard now prefer to eat at Konnie's Cafe where they can sometimes get credit.

Women from the Standard Gasket Company either take their lunches to work and eat in cars parked on the street or go to Konnie's or El Terraso Cafe for a quick sandwich lunch. At the end of the working day, the men and women often drink a beer at Konnie's while waiting for their rides home. Several Barrio residents who have worked at the Standard Company note that one advantage of living in the neighborhood is its proximity to their jobs and the easy access from job to home at lunchtime and at the end of the day.

One group of Anglo men from the Standard Company—workmen and foremen—eat lunch at Konnie's or, more often, drink there after work. They joke with the company employees but seldom sit at the same table with Mexican-Americans. By early evening the outside workers have left the neighborhood.

Entertainment-seekers and profit-makers. The corner of Ryan and Woodry is the busiest intersection of El Barrio and the heart of the business district. The Boom-Bang Lounge and Cafe occupies the ground space of a turn-of-the-century bank. The second floor of the building is vacant, although upon occasion musicians at the lounge may sleep in one of the upstairs apartments. The Boom-Bang is a taxidance lounge and it attracts clients, especially men, from throughout the city who come to drink and dance. The owner of the Boom-Bang makes his profit from the sale of beer. He provides the dance band, but only on weekend nights is a cover charge required. Beer sells for only five cents more than its regular price, and the taxidancers charge only twenty-five cents.

Three types of women attend the nightly dances at the lounge. The first type either works or attends to housewifely duties in the daytime. She supplements her income by dancing with men in the evenings. She differs from the other two types in that she earns money at the lounge only by dancing. The second type is a prostitute who goes to the Boom-Bang to be "picked up." She and a customer leave the dancehall for one of the nearby hotels in the downtown area and a short time thereafter she returns to the lounge—usually driven by the customer—where she again dances for profit until propositioned. The third type of taxidancer works for a *padrote,* a man who determines whether she shall act as a prostitute at these dances and, perhaps also, which customers she may sexually engage. A *padrote* may have a steady taxidancer at the lounge. He attends the

dances both to oversee his girlfriend's behavior and to dance with her. *Padrotes* may be married to these women, or may live with them in free union; in such cases, it is up to the discretion of the *padrote* to decide whether the female shall act as prostitute. One respondent spoke with contempt of *padrotes,* saying that they take the girls' nightly earnings and often encourage their women to act as prostitutes for the *padrotes'* own gain. Some *padrotes* go to the lounge not to look after their women but to dance with other women and to be among other men of their kind. In the opinion of one informant who grew up in the neighborhood and now returns to it to work, such persons are not "men." Of one person in particular the respondent remarked:

> He thinks life is hopeless. I guess it's a hopeless life for him. He's not a thief or anything, but he's got his wife—prostitute, that sort of thing. At the same time he's got feelings for her. He's a *padrote* that visits there. That's how that guy makes a living. He don't work or anything. She makes the money. That's why he's not even a man.

Early in the evening men drink in clusters at the bar. After the women arrive and the music begins, the men approach the women and ask them to dance. The latter are usually seated at tables along the walls in pairs or small groups. The taxidancers carry small coin purses while they dance and after the dance they are paid. Men with dates also frequent the Boom-Bang; they alternate dances with their dates and with the other women present.

Although the Boom-Bang's clientele is primarily Mexican, an occasional Anglo attends. Of all the non-Barrio people who frequent the neighborhood, the Anglo best deserves the label "outsider." He shares few of the values of either Mexican-American insiders or outsiders and is essentially interested in exploiting the Barrio's opportunities for illicit behavior. To illustrate, the following incident is recounted.

One evening an Anglo entered the lounge looking for his *"compadre,"* who he claimed visited the Boom-Bang almost nightly; on this particular evening, however, the "compadre" was not to be found. The Anglo had several beers and then observed, "Look at me. Here I am chasing after this stuff when I have a wife and a kid at home." He pointed to a table where three women sat; he knew their names, and warned that one was "going steady" with someone and would not go to bed with anyone else. "I've been crying to get some of her for a long time." He had attempted on a previous night to proposition one of the other women, but her boyfriend "beat the shit out of her. . . . I don't want any of that." The Anglo joined the three women and bought them soft drinks. For the one in whom he was particularly interested he bought a package of cigarettes. On the dance floor he propositioned the woman. Upon returning to his seat, he said delightedly, "I got her thinking about it."

After the lounge closed at midnight, the Anglo accompanied the women to El Terraso Cafe across the street. Everyone ordered coffee, and the women taunted the now drunk Anglo. *"Eres puro cabron* (You're nothing but a son of a bitch)," jeered one, knowing the Anglo could not understand. Then the women's attention turned to other taxidancers inside the cafe, and one observed derisively: *"Mira, mira lo que está usando aquélla; es puras loces. Wacha los zapatos. No son de ella. Están muy grandes* (Look, look at what that one is wearing; it's nothing but sequins. Look at her shoes. They're not hers. They're too big)."

Two of the taxidancers departed together, leaving the Anglo with the girl he had propositioned. He pleaded with her to allow him to take her home; she hesitated but finally acquiesced.

El Barrio residents often refer to the Boom-Bang as a trouble spot which should be avoided. On weekends, the neighborhood boys often spy on the lounge to see which men leave with which women. Violence at the lounge, if not frequent, is certainly not rare. Fights, stabbings, shootings, and murders have occurred, often over the affections of a woman. There are two policemen whose first duty is to maintain order at the dancehall and break up the fights which periodically erupt, although they also attend to other neighborhood disturbances.

Mexican-Americans generally prefer that matters such as assaults and arguments be settled among themselves with such authorities as the police administering only the most necessary assistance. Both outsiders and insiders agree that a man should settle his own scores; rather than turn to the law, he should himself seek revenge if he has been wronged or attacked.

Outsider friends. Mexican-American men from the North Side, the Second Ward, and other parts of the city seek out Barrio friends at night. They usually drink at one of the bars or cafes, and their conversations concern mutual friends and times past. Both insiders and outsiders are laboring men, and they share information about available jobs. Although these friendly get-togethers occur regularly, they are usually not previously planned, and no time or place is determined for the next meeting.

Members of the Mexican-American Middle Class. Two middle-class Mexican-American men have regular business contracts with the neighborhood. They represent the more articulate element of the Mexican-American community and provide the neighborhood with information regarding the larger Mexican-American community of Houston, of Texas, and of the nation.

Ramiro Espinoza belongs to a number of civic and political organizations; of much concern to him is the welfare of the Mexican-Americans of Houston and of Texas. He has served as Chairman of the Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations (PASO), is a member of the Harris County Coalition (a liberal labor group) and of the Board of Directors of the Council

on Human Relations, and is active in several other organizations. Espinoza lived with his wife in El Barrio when he was establishing his business. Later he moved to a middle-class neighborhood, but he still maintains a wholesale warehouse in El Barrio. He takes sales orders at his store and conducts much of his business and political planning over coffee at Konnie's Cafe. On occasion he has taken visiting dignitaries to the cafe and he readily introduces them to neighborhood people. Espinoza regularly informs Konnie of his activities, and she relays the information, with some discretion, to her neighborhood friends. For example, she may speak of his projected political conferences, his recent visit to the White House, or his impatience to get government agencies to recruit Mexican-Americans for welfare programs.

By and large, the Barrio people know Ramiro Espinoza, but few of them speak of him as a man with a mission or as an articulator of their particular political interests. Generally, they appear indifferent to, if not ignorant of, his political activities and proposals. However, they know the man. They know him as a man who has had a store in the neighborhood for years, a busy man who makes out-of-town trips regularly, and perhaps even as the man who delivers the supplies to the several drug stores in Mexican-American communities. But generally they do not know of Ramiro Espinoza as a prominent political leader and civic personality.

The other middle-class Mexican-American man who has more than casual contact with the neighborhood is Alfredo Alva. Like Espinoza, Alva grew up in El Barrio but now lives in a middle-class Anglo neighborhood. As a newspaper distributor in the general area of El Barrio, he is in daily, although brief, contact with the neighborhood. Alva knows of Espinoza as a civic and political leader and speaks with some deference of the latter's opinions. Alva himself is concerned with the general welfare of Mexican-Americans, although he has not joined interest group organizations. He is of the opinion that Mexican-Americans, especially those in other parts of Texas, do not enjoy the same advantages as the rest of society. However, he is critical of Mexican-Americans who behave in ways detrimental to themselves and to *La Raza* in general. He criticizes the types of family arrangements often found in El Barrio, and is especially critical of men who, in his opinion, do not give adequate economic support to their families.

Espinoza and Alva have but limited contacts with El Barrio. Although both express concern for the welfare of Mexican-Americans, their relations with the neighborhood are not likely to produce the changes within it that both men value.

Middle-class Mexican-American men like these express an overriding concern with the welfare of Mexican-Americans and the course of future Mexican-American accomplishments. They see Mexican-Americans as a unified people by virtue of their common historical antecedents and they

believe that, in the future, Mexican-Americans will become part of the American middle class. The class structure outlined earlier—middle class, traditionalist, mass—is not rigidly defined in the minds of the middle-class Mexican-Americans. Rather, they perceive "more successful" and "less successful" Mexican-Americans, and they feel that the course to social betterment awaits the person who perseveres—provided legal and social discriminations do not hinder his progress. It is specifically toward removing such discriminations that many active Mexican-Americans dedicate themselves.

There is yet another type of middle-class Mexican-American, different from that represented by Espinoza and Alva, who is involved in neighborhood activity and is purposefully operating in El Barrio to produce valued changes.

Francisco Reyes grew up in El Barrio. He knows some of the neighborhood's history and proudly recalls that his father was one of the construction workers who built St. Xavier's Catholic Church. Reyes fought in Europe during World War II; after the war he returned to Houston and bought property in the area surrounding the neighborhood, lived on his property for a short period, then rented it out. He accumulated investments and with the benefits available to veterans bought a house in a middle-class Anglo neighborhood. When middle-class Negroes anticipated moving into this Anglo area, some of the residents formed a "civic organization" to keep the Negroes out. Reyes, however, helped persuade the members to channel their efforts toward community improvements instead and thus he facilitated the transition from a white to an integrated neighborhood.

Since his childhood, Reyes has been an active member of St. Xavier's Catholic Church. He reads announcements at mass and, when the vernacular was introduced to the mass, he read the liturgy to the celebrants. But his more important role is as organizer of church-sponsored activities, such as softball teams, the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), and the Holy Name Society.

Reyes is sentimentally attached to El Barrio but he believes that the church stands a better chance of survival if it is relocated to the north of the neighborhood where there is a growing Mexican-American population which includes many former El Barrio residents. The projected relocation of the church requires large sums of money and a series of festivals, carnivals, and other profit-making activities has been conducted to raise the necessary funds. At Reyes' instigation, the CYO and the Holy Name Society also began sponsoring such activities. Through participation in church activities, some of the El Barrio residents come into contact with middle-class Mexican-Americans such as Reyes.

The membership of the CYO is largely composed of former El Barrio residents who now live in the North Side. It is a small group. Official

positions in the organization are held largely by persons from outside the neighborhood, and the group's main goal is to raise funds for the new church. Membership in the CYO is for young persons; this fact alone limits the opportunities for more extensive contact between the general population of El Barrio and middle-class Mexican-Americans. The youngsters from the neighborhood who participate in church activity are usually girls. The sports teams, not unlike the CYO, are also restricted to the young. However, older persons acting as group sponsors do provide some cross-generational contact.

Many of the participants in the church-sponsored ball teams are from outside the neighborhood. There are important differences between Barrio and non-Barrio youngsters. The attitudes of these latter are those of middle-class Mexican-Americans; these youngsters appear more achievement-oriented and, although they may not fulfill their ambitions, they nonetheless aspire to advance, usually via technical education, beyond a secondary school level. These non-Barrio youngsters are considerably more articulate and expressive than their Barrio age mates. They speak English with only a slight or no inflection; some also speak Spanish well, but even if they do not speak standard grammatical Spanish, they discriminate English from Spanish in their speech. In contrast, the Barrio youngsters integrate Spanish and English to produce the peculiar patois used by many Mexican-Americans.

Traditionalists. The traditionalist status group is composed of persons who belong to and participate in clubs that promote Mexican traditions. Membership in these clubs is exclusive and prestigious.

Isabel Gonzalez, a founding member of one traditionalist club, lives in El Barrio. His family's social activity, however, is non-Barrio centered and the family and its upper status is therefore unknown to most neighborhood residents. Because they do not interact with the neighborhood, the Gonzalez family's traditionalist activities are even less well known to Barrio residents than are middle-class activities; indeed, the members of the family are more accurately characterized as "outsiders" rather than "insiders."

The Insiders

El Barrio residents are identifiable by the associations they form. The primary form of association is the family; other associations are a streetcorner group, a street gang, and church groups.

The streetcorner group. Men and women who spend their days and evenings socializing at streetcorner bars and cafes form a segment of the neighborhood which is significant for the attention it often draws from the authorities. In the streetcorner group there are two subgroups: 1) an

action-seeking subgroup for whose members "Life is episodic. . . . The goal is action, an opportunity for thrills"; and, 2) a routine-seeking subgroup, composed of "people whose aim is the establishment of a stable way of living" (Gans, 1962: 28–29).

Most streetcorner individuals are of the first subgroup, the action-seekers. Many pass the daytime hours drinking at the Jade Bar, Konnie's Cafe, and other similar establishments in the neighborhood. The men are middle-aged or older and usually have moved to the Barrio from other parts of the state or city; a few come from the neighborhood itself. Characteristically, the streetcorner action-seekers are divorced and live away from their families; the men generally occupy rooming houses on Ryan Avenue. One exception among the women, however, is Mrs. Rodrigo, who lives in free union with a routine-seeking streetcorner man. She maintains her children in a rooming house on Ryan Avenue and spends much of her time drinking at one of the area bars or in her home.

Streetcorner women do not necessarily live in the neighborhood, although most resided there at some time. Generally, they are transient and move in and out of El Barrio in almost regular patterns. Some live or have lived in free union with streetcorner men; when the relationship ends, the women leave the Barrio but continue to frequent the neighborhood bars, where they meet with their friends and form new unions with local men.

For most of the action-seekers, life centers around a series of adventures—drinking bouts and encounters with other action-seeking men and women or with the law. Life for them is episodic.

Routine-seeking streetcorner men, in contrast, lead less episodic lives although, like the action-seekers, they are detached from family obligations. They are usually older men and may be retired.

A neighborhood gang. Still another element of streetcorner society is a gang of young neighborhood boys who play dominoes, shoot pool, and drink with the streetcorner men. Two of the four regular gang members are married, yet much of their time is spent away from their families and with their streetcorner friends. All four boys grew up in the neighborhood, began associating with one another at an early age, and dropped out of school to go to work.

Ascensión Carranza appears to be the focal personality in the gang. His friends often come to his house to discuss past adventures and to smoke and drink. The conversation inevitably leads to *relaje*, a kind of verbal game consisting of a rapid exchange of insults with strong sexual overtones. These get-togethers usually occur at night when Ascensión's mother works as a charwoman. When Ascensión's house is not available the group goes to Robe Contrera's house. On rare occasions the boys may also drink in the backyard of Joe Ruiz' house. Generally, they drink away from the

streetcorner since they are minors and to drink at the corner would cause the bar owners trouble with the authorities.

Ascensión Carranza and Robe Contreras are married. Their wives and children live with the boys' parents; this arrangement relieves the young husbands of various family economic obligations and enables them to work only intermittently, thus allowing them more time for their friends and for gang activity.

The gang's major sources of *pasadas* (kicks) are alcohol, fights, and sex. The action-seekers gravitate toward one another and away from *cuquadras* ("squares," i.e., routine-seekers and others who are not closely action-oriented). On occasion the gang may victimize the "squares," at least mildly, and these latter learn to avoid the action-seekers.

By virtue of its exclusive interpersonal relations, Ascensión's gang may be differentiated from the group of older streetcorner men. Ascensión, Pablo, Robe, and Joe "hang" together and their association is not restricted solely to the corner, as is the activity of the older streetcorner men.

Manuel Cedillo, a member of this latter group, occasionally drinks with the young men and sometimes supplies them with marijuana. Manuel spent most of his childhood in El Barrio and one of his boyhood friends on the streetcorner was Guillermo Contreras, the older brother of Robe. During their boyhood Manuel and Guillermo associated in a gang not unlike Ascensión's. Jail terms and a series of marriages and fights from the law kept Manuel away from the neighborhood for several years.

Guillermo went into the service; after his return to El Barrio he became an alcoholic and was eventually admitted to a federal hospital. He later returned to his parents' Barrio home. Both Manuel and Guillermo are now action-seeking streetcorner men. They have periodic adventures with marijuana and women but spend most of their time drinking.

The members of Ascensión's gang have led lives similar to those of Manuel and Guillermo. Ascensión was arrested for robbery and served a prison term. While on parole he married and took his wife to live with his parents in El Barrio. There he rejoined his friend, Robe Contreras. Robe married once, divorced his wife, and then remarried. Both his wives lived with him at his parents' home. In El Barrio, Ascensión and Robe associate as they did in boyhood, along with Ascensión's brother, Pablo. Joe Ruiz has also become a member of this informal gang. Joe's younger brother, Richie, often tries to join the older boys, but as the price of his participation he is made the butt of *el relajo*. Pablo Carranza is another, less frequent, participant in gang activities.

Members of the Barrio's *streetcorner "society"* are recruited from the *neighborhood gang* (the *"palomilla,"* as writers on Mexican-Americans, and occasionally the gang members themselves, refer to the association). New members are chosen from young boys in the neighborhood who have

rejected social interaction with *escuadras* (squares); these recruits are often relatives of boys already in the gang.

Some interaction between the *palomilla* and the neighborhood *esquadras* is unavoidable. The sisters of Robe and Joe participate in the church CYO and softball teams and may be considered *escuadras.* However, interaction between the boys and their sisters takes place predominantly within the home.

Church groups. The church and its activities are primarily under the aegis of middle-class Mexican-Americans. Contacts between middle-class and low-income church members are mainly between young people. The church groups involve both Barrio and non-Barrio youngsters, but the latter are more active. Through instruction in the use of formal club organization, a more routinized, procedural, and cooperative participation in social activities is encouraged.

Life Styles

Certain life styles and modes of personality adjustment appear among the low-income segment of the Mexican-American population in the Houston Barrio. Poverty is an important variable which contributes to the emergence of these characteristic life styles. Lewis (1966) has presented the "culture of poverty" as an identifiable way of life which develops among groups who are economically deprived relative to the larger society.

In the last section, two Barrio life styles were discussed: action-seeking and routine-seeking. In all poverty pockets (Negro and Anglo as well as Mexican-American), these same life styles are likely to exist. The "culture of poverty" appears to be characterized especially in the action-seeking and in other similar moment-to-moment life modes. The personality which is associated with such life styles may seem "inadequate" by middle-class urban standards, as Ausubel (1958:42) notes:

> The inadequate personality fails to conceive of himself as an independent adult and fails to identify with such normal adult goals as financial independence, stable employment, and the establishment of his own home and family. He is passive, dependent, unreliable, and unwilling to postpone immediate gratification of pleasurable impulses. He demonstrates no desire to persevere in the face of environmental difficulties, or to accept responsibilities which he finds distasteful. His preoccupation with a search for effortless pleasure represents both an inappropriate persistence of childhood motivations which he has not yet outgrown and a regressive form of compensation for his inability to obtain satisfaction from adult goals.

The culture of poverty, as evidenced in action-seeking and other similar life styles, is adaptive to the conditions of Barrio life. However, the fact that many of the middle-class and traditionalist informants included in this study originated in analogous or congruent poverty situations implies that still other factors are involved. These individuals, who grew up in

circumstances of poverty, attribute much of their success to their childhood home life and to their parents' values and aspirations for them. Within the Barrio, the routine-seeking life style approximates that of the Anglo middle class. Mexican-American families and individuals who evidence this life mode appear to be making those types of personal adjustment conducive to upward mobility and achievement in the dominant society.

To illustrate the Barrio's diverse life styles and some of their antecedents, portraits of three families are presented in the following pages. The extent of family influence upon the individual family members is not easily determined, nor are family types facilely delineated. After months of extensive observation and informal interviewing of several Barrio families, however, the uniqueness of each family arrangement became increasingly apparent, although some similarities may be noted, such as intrafamilial dependence. Two of the families discussed below are headed by routine-seeking adults. The male head of the third family may be characterized as a member of the "culture of poverty."

The third and last section in this chapter presents the results of a series of interviews with Barrio children in grades one through six. This information is intended to supplement the section on adult life styles to reveal the values, attitudes, and aspirations of poverty children in an urban environment.

The Zavala Family

Esperanza Zavala stood on the cracked cement sidewalk outside her Barrio home. Hands on hips, she stared absently down the dirt road that wound its way between the ponderous columns which supported the freeway sweeping overhead. The massive, smooth, concrete highway winging its way toward the heart of the city contrasted sharply with the rutted road underneath it, which bumped its leisurely way past old houses, across railroad tracks, and out towards warehouses and fields.

It was summer, and the air was hot and heavy in the late morning. Behind Esperanza, the screen door opened and closed carefully as her youngest daughter Margarita emerged. Slim, barefoot, and dressed in maroon print cotton shorts and loose-fitting blouse, Margarita stepped between the garbage cans set out at the edge of the road; crossing the street under the viaduct, she purposefully mounted the wooden steps of the house just across the way and retrieved a toy which her brother's twins had left there earlier that morning. Her brother, Little Sam, and his wife used to live there; but they recently moved, though not far away, and a Negro family now occupies the house—a fact which disturbs some of the Barrio residents, such as Jesus de la Cruz who lives around the corner. Esperanza doesn't mind, however.

In spite of the fact that Little Sam and his wife have moved, they still

continue to leave their children with Esperanza during the day. Little Sam is presently unemployed, but his wife works in a department store. Although the responsibility of caring for the children is therefore Little Sam's, he instead relegates it to his mother. His brother, Roberto, also brings his two children over occasionally. Esperanza, for the most part, ignores them all, leaving her grandchildren in her daughters' charge; however, the girls usually simply lock the house doors and leave the children inside to entertain themselves.

Margarita has just completed seventh grade and is pleased with her grades. She seems quite mature for her age; perhaps it is her purposeful movements, or the calm with which she considers and then responds to whatever remarks are addressed to her. "I had my children so far apart they have grown up with adults," her mother once said.

Esperanza's oldest son, Manuel, is nearing thirty; Little Sam and Roberto are in their mid-twenties; Rosa, 22, married about two years ago shortly after Esperanza's husband, Sam, died. Seventeen-year-old Agnes has recently married, and now Margarita is the only child left at home although the other Zavala siblings live nearby and often leave their children with her or stop in to visit.

In the past, Margarita spent her summers visiting friends or relatives, playing softball in the nearby park, or riding her bicycle through the neighborhood. After her father died, she was no longer allowed to play on the softball team. Margarita isn't sure why her mother insisted on this, but thinks it is related to the mourning period. Esperanza explained that she was too upset by her husband's death to risk any other misfortunes in the family.

The neighborhood elementary school closed two years ago and Margarita must now ride her bicycle twelve blocks to another school. Besides caring for her siblings' children, Margarita also tries to keep the house tidy. Somehow, though, dishes keep piling up, the floor is never quite as clean as it should be, and things are generally in a state of minor disarray. Esperanza no longer seems to care.

Margarita paused for a moment in the shadow of the Valhalla Viaduct to observe her mother. Esperanza has seen half a century but her hair is still black and thick; it is short now, not as it once was, as revealed in the photographs on the glass cabinet where china and glasses are kept—photographs which show Esperanza dancing with her husband, her hair long and tied back, the way Margarita now wears hers.

Margarita approached her mother. "Ay, Margarita, it was a miracle," said Esperanza, and Margarita knew that her mother had been gazing in the direction of the church where Esperanza had married her husband, baptized his children, and then buried him. "I miss him so much. It's not that I miss the money. I miss *him*."

After Sam died, Esperanza had "gone down, down very low, almost berserk," as she described the experience later. The crowning blow for her was the news that the old church was to be torn down. Everything is gone now—the church that had witnessed the birth and death and hopes of her married life with Sam, the church just around the corner where "everyone used to be like a big family." Then in the midst of her misfortunes, the miracle happened: just two weeks before the old church was torn down, a minister called from another congregation; he was very kind and persuaded Esperanza to attend his church, which was not far away.

Rosa, like her mother, also had difficulty adjusting to the fact of Sam's death. A month after his funeral she said:

> I can't believe that he isn't here anymore. I keep thinking that he's going to come home from work any moment. He used to say, "Save your pennies because I'm not going to be here forever." But we didn't think he would ever die. I've been over here cleaning the doors and things because he used to get them full of grease. I guess he's never going to get them with grease anymore.
>
> I don't know if I'm going to feel right coming over anymore. I come over because it is my daddy's house. My mother didn't treat us the way he used to. He helped a lot. When Pedro and I went to the dance, Pedro would buy me a Coke and one for him, or a beer and a soda water for me, or maybe a mixed drink for me. We didn't waste our money but there wasn't any left after we got groceries and things. My father used to help us out a *whole lot.*

Sam Zavala had co-signed for the furniture that Rosa and her husband Pedro bought after their marriage. On three occasions the couple failed to meet their debts and Sam paid the installments. The day before his death, Sam and Rosa had argued over the matter, for Sam had just made another payment. Agnes recalled that her father swore it would be the last payment that he would make for Pedro and Rosa:

> Rosa got so doggone mad at my father because he said, "I'm not going to pay for you no more." She started cussin' him and arguing with him and all that stuff. Daddy was driving her to her house when he told her that, and she got so mad that she said, "And I don't need you to take me anywhere." She got out of the truck and started walking home.
>
> The next day my daddy got sick and we took him to the hospital. That's when he died. Rosa started feeling so bad. She said that it was her fault because my daddy died. She blamed it on herself. She stopped coming over here so much, but now it's like it always was.

Margarita remembered that she must go in and practice the organ for the coming Sunday's 11:00 o'clock mass. She and her mother opened the torn screen door and entered the storefront now used as a storage area and crammed with a table, bicycles, and boxes. The house is a comfortably spacious two-story structure. Before Margarita was born, the Zavalas ran a grocery downstairs and rented the second floor to male roomers in order to earn extra income to pay off the mortgage on the house. After Sam

died, Esperanza began to take in roomers again to supplement her pension.

For some time Esperanza had considered reopening the storefront as a grocery. Another family, which has since moved from the Barrio, used to run a small store in which a limited selection of goods was available at prices higher than those charged by larger stores outside the neighborhood.

Margarita went upstairs to practice the organ; it had been given to her by the son of a Spanish-speaking family that had lived in the area. Esperanza had taken in the young man after his parents had suddenly declared to him when he turned 21 that he was on his own and would receive no more support from them; he often came to Esperanza for advice. He taught Margarita to play the organ and made her a gift of it when he entered a seminary. Even though he was not allowed to communicate with anyone outside the seminary, he occasionally managed to write letters to the Zavala family ("under the covers").

Esperanza sat down for a minute on a gold-patterned, plastic-covered chair at the table beside the stairway in the large entrance hall which substitutes as a dining room. The banister is lined with artificial white roses, and against the back wall by the kitchen door is a low table with more roses in a vase. The roses are left from the recent wedding of Esperanza's 17-year-old daughter, Agnes. Photographs of Agnes and her husband are prominently displayed on the walls, dressers, and cabinets, as are numerous photos of other members of the Zavala family. Esperanza was a little concerned about Agnes' fiancé—Esperanza didn't know the boy very well but finally decided she was being "old-fashioned" to worry.

Family photographs dominate the dining room. Esperanza keeps an extensive pictorial record of the Zavala family's activities. As she observes, "Everybody went to the dances together. I have pictures of those times—because some people say they went to this place or that, and then other people say no, you didn't go; but when you have pictures, you can prove it."

When her husband died, however, Esperanza no longer went anywhere.

> My sons come and ask me to go with them some place and I tell them, "Don't you feel that your father is dead?" I still don't want to go anywhere or do anything, because with him I went everywhere—every place reminds me of him, there is no place he did not take me.

Esperanza's neighborhood activities had always been fairly limited but when Sam died they were even further curtailed. In the past, she always accompanied her husband or her children on outings; she met with her neighbors in church and on special occasions such as holidays, marriages, and baptisms. She proudly recalls, "The day my sons got married we had an open house for everyone passing by—we had food inside, outside, and

in the back yard. When the Zavala family had a party, everyone in the neighborhood knew about it."

Esperanza limited her relations with her neighbors because Sam wished her to remain at home.

> When we first got married there was no one to give me advice; I didn't know if I was living good or bad. My husband didn't want me to go around the neighborhood to gossip, he wanted me to meet him at home after work. That's why I never visited with my neighbors. Now that my husband has died, they are very good to us. There is an old saying, that friendship goes farther than money sometimes, and I think it's true. I just visit with them when I sweep the sidewalk or go around the corner for a walk.

Family harmony was very important to Esperanza. Gregarious and frendly, she loved to talk with people and compared herself to a mirror. Within the neighborhood, various people came to her for advice, and even the new priests and nuns who joined the area churches would come to visit her and solicit advice. "I was 15 when I came to this area, and I know everyone here," she announced. "I knew all the children and their mothers, and I felt like they were my sons. Ask anyone about Esperanza Zavala and they will tell you the same thing, that I loved them and they loved me too." But now everyone was leaving; even the old church was gone. The Zavalas were almost the only family left of the long-term Barrio residents.

As she sat at the dining room table, Esperanza tried to shake free of these ideas and to think instead about the evening's dinner. Rosa and her husband would probably come (Agnes once commented ironically on their tendency to show up around mealtimes), and Esperanza hoped that Rosa would arrive in time to help prepare the meal. Esperanza wondered if Little Sam would come also and decided that, even if he did, there would be enough food for everyone. Esperanza remembers the many times that the Zavala family gathered in this house.

On one such occasion, a year before his death, Sam came home after working through a Sunday morning. Rosa and her husband Pedro were there, and Roberto had stopped by earlier. Esperanza was painting and redecorating the living room. Margarita came storming into the house, complaining that she had not been able to attend her niece's birthday party because Little Sam had given her the wrong address. Everyone made light of her complaint, but the elder Zavala said he would take Margarita to the party and left Esperanza to finish painting. Esperanza complained:

> When there's something to be done I have to do it myself. There's nobody around to help with anything, not even the boys. They don't appreciate anything you do for them. Roberto *viene aquí y quiebra todo* (Roberto comes here and breaks everything). *Dice mi esposo* (my husband says) that I have nothing but junk, but it means something to me. I want to break Roberto of that habit, coming here and breaking everything. *Les pega a los niños cuando tocan las cosas* (he hits the children when they touch things).
> I don't know if it's like this everywhere: *yo me crie sola* (I was raised by myself).

Rosa and Pedro left the Zavala house but returned again just before dinner. Pedro brought a pair of Bermuda shorts which he himself ironed while Rosa helped her mother in the kitchen.

Esperanza and Rosa prepared broiled T-bone steak, rice, frijoles, cranberry sauce, *tortillas de harina* (flour tortillas), and bread. Coca-Cola was first poured into a *jarra* (pottery jar) with ice, and then into glasses (small preserve jars). A large kitchen knife to carve the meat was placed on the table. Pedro was first to come to the table; he served himself and then sat on the couch with his plate resting on the table. When he finished eating he went to another room to watch television.

Rosa and Esperanza were discussing Pedro at the table. Rosa commented that Pedro's cousin had invited them to a *quinceañera* dance (a fifteen-year-old girl's birthday and "coming out"party), but that Pedro did not know his cousin's last name. "They know each other by their first names or their nicknames but not ever by their last names. I think it's just Pedro because his little brother knows everyone by their real name. He's like that."

After dinner, the three hurried to finish painting before the rest of the family returned.

On another evening, after Sam's death, Esperanza had made *tortillas de harina* while Agnes, Margarita, and a neighbor girl sat in the living room watching one adventure program after another on television and doing their best to avoid listening to the news. "I don't like to hear the news on T.V.," Agnes insisted. They were disappointed to find that McHale's Navy (a comedy) had been displaced by a quiz program.

Esperanza cooked unassisted in the kitchen. She prepared a bowl of *chile* and a *salsa* (sauce) made from *chile verde* (jalapeño), onion, and tomato. She heated refried beans in a black skillet and tortillas over a metal sheet blackened around the edges but smooth and clean in the center. Her rolling pin consisted of a metal pipe. She took the dough from a red plastic dishpan and balled it into a small loaf. Then she placed it on a corner of the vinyl table top and rolled the pipe over the dough until it was flattened into the round shape of the tortilla—rolling once, turning the dough about 90 degrees and rolling again.

The girls became impatient with the quiz program and abruptly decided that they wanted to see Rosa "about something." Agnes remarked, "Rosa all of a sudden has gotten real ignorant about the clipboard that I loaned her. I'm going to need it in school. What does she want it for?"

Esperanza overheard Agnes' remark and came to the living room to add, "I don't like that about coming over here just to see what you can find. The things we have we need. That's why we have them. If my husband was living, that would be different."

"Rita," Esperanza demanded, turing to Margarita, "are you still watching that T.V.? That's all you do, isn't it? You get up in the morning and the first thing—the T.V. No wonder you have those headaches of yours. Look at those legs! Go take a bath right now. Aren't you ashamed?"

Agnes answered for Margarita, out of range of their mother's hearing: "Nope, I'm just like you. I don't take baths." The girls giggled. Connie, who was visiting, pretended embarrassment. Margarita turned to the television again, as though her mother had said nothing. Esperanza returned to the kitchen. "Let's go right now," Agnes said, and the girls left.

Through observation of the familial interactions within the Zavala and other households, a general Barrio pattern emerges—i.e., the tendency for parents to encourage dependency among their children. Several family members may work at the same place, and in an effort to be helpful, parents often find jobs for their children although their children may thus be deterred from learning to cope with larger societal institutions; children are often slow to establish their own independent, self-sufficient households as a result of too-close ties with their parents.

Children with families of their own often feel comfortable in requesting financial or other kinds of assistance from their parents. Before Sam Zavala's death, his children felt free to come and go, taking what they needed in the form of household equipment. In contrast, after Sam's death, because of her "insecurity" as she terms it, Esperanza became more possessive of her household items and more ambivalent about her children's dependency.

Children are encouraged to live near their parents and to visit them frequently, as do Rosa and her husband and Little Sam. Often Rosa comes early in the morning and stays until late at night, a situation which sometimes causes friction within the family.

When sons live in the same area as their parents, neighbors seem to assume that the parents are responsible for their sons' actions. One of the Barrio landlords, for example, requested his tenant's mother, who lived elsewhere, for her son's unpaid rent.

The dependency which develops within the family setting is a source of various interpersonal tensions. The Zavala family are perhaps unusual in the degree of unity and harmony they enjoy, though some tensions are evident. Although the exchange of money and possessions creates a familial stability between children and parents, it also fosters rivalries and jealousies.

While Sam Zavala lived, the parents' responsibility was to assist their sons and their sons' families to establish themselves, but with the crisis of a death in the family, the sons were expected to aid the family more than they had in the past.

Jealousies occasionally erupt among the Zavala siblings. For example, family members criticize Rosa for spending so much time at her mother's house; she and Esperanza appear to be quite close. Agnes says that Rosa does not get along well with her brothers and their wives. Both Agnes and Margarita are jealous of the attention Rosa receives from their mother and resent the fact that Esperanza often takes Rosa's side in family disagreements. They are also indignant when Rosa does not reprimand her daughter for making a mess of the house and leaves Agnes and Margarita to clean up.

Esperanza is fond of Rosa and her husband; although they are the least affluent of her children, they bring her small gifts of potatoes, sugar, and flowers for which she is quite grateful. They in turn feel that Esperanza is a great source of help and comfort; to express their affection and appreciation for Esperanza, they named their daughter after her.

When Roberto was separated from his wife and therefore returned to live with his mother, he was upset at Rosa's frequent visits. Rosa countered with recriminations over Robert's presence. Little Sam also complained of Rosa's ubiquity, even though he admitted that he himself visited his mother's house "every day, or every other day."

Rosa's husband, Pedro, is not well respected by the rest of the family. Little Sam considers him a poor provider and accuses him of general backwardness and incompetence. For a while Pedro made a living by collecting junk; eventually he took a job as a machinist apprentice. Pedro received ten years of schooling whereas Rosa received eleven.

Relations between Pedro and Rosa are sometimes strained. When serious altercations occur, Rosa usually returns to her mother's house, but once she vanished for several days; Agnes speculated that Rosa was with a former boyfriend.

Little Sam assumes an attitude of independence and toughness toward the rest of the family and the world in general. Because of the age differences which separate him from his siblings, he does not feel close to any one of them. He does not wish to go into business with his brother Roberto.

> He doesn't go half and half. I do all the mechanic work, very cheap. The bastard, he comes in at three or four in the morning and wakes me up if he has something broken in his car. I go fix it for him; I don't have to, but I do. Sometimes he bothers me too much. He w[illegible] pretty good, but he's a complainer.

Neither did Little Sam enjoy the harmonious relationship with his father that Esperanza did. Little Sam recalls:

> It was very hard to work with him sometimes—we used to argue too much. He says one thing, I say another, so I shut up and let him talk. I like to argue, man, but when I'm right and it's important, I could beat you up to prove it. We would argue about the truck—the rear axle, etc. I knew I was right, but he got too mad, it used to drive me crazy but I didn't want to say anything.

His relationship with Rosa is minimal—"I don't bother with her, we just visit."

About his wife, Little Sam remarks:

> She's all right, I mean she doesn't bother me, she doesn't get in my way. When she starts to fuck me up I just walk out, I just don't pay any attention. Sometimes I really give it to her.

Little Sam's wife works in a department store and earns $60 a week, whereas Sam spends most of his days lounging with his streetcorner friends or visiting with Esperanza. Yet he once said to his wife, "If I had your education I wouldn't be working for no $60 a week. I'd make me lots of money." He also criticizes certain residents of the neighborhood to whom he refers as *"ignorantes"*; "If they're so smart, why don't they get out and earn lots of money?" He himself has many trades—as an auto mechanic, an air-conditioner repairman, a truck driver, and a musician; yet he does not feel motivated to take a steady job. His wife earns enough money for them to live comfortably in their own house with a color TV and a stereo. Esperanza doesn't like the idea of Little Sam's working as a musician, but she thinks he is doing fairly well for himself.

Throughout Little Sam's callous, off-hand conversation runs a plea for dignity. He is aware of the contrast between the surrounding city and the Barrio, and he expresses both his antipathy for and attraction to the system in which such a contrast prevails:

> Politicians talk about helping people, but mostly they just talk to people and bullshit. They build apartments for people . . . but they can't eat the apartments. The politicians work on getting parks for the city, but they should hire people with no education and pay them decent money. . . . They spend money on fixing the roads—that's for the city; maybe somebody could be hurt by a dip in the road, but they spend lots on stuff that's not important, like putting grass in here and grass in there—God, man, people don't eat grass.
>
> The politicians are like the policemen and the courthouse, all of them are after the same thing, it's a big racket. If you have money you can get what you want; if you don't have it, you just die. They steal from you, and then you go to Welfare, and you don't know what kind of shit they gonna pull on you—they give you a can of beans, they don't know what's going on inside you. There are some people who have lost their dignity—they don't care about dignity, they just expect to go and kneel and ask for something. Shit, I wouldn't do that for nothing. That's why there are a lot of ignorant people with no sense. In this world it's dog eat dog—if you don't, you won't be eating.

Little Sam quit school when he was thirteen. His mother considered this a dishonor and his father whipped him. But Little Sam wants his children to go to school whether they like it or not, though he also claims he doesn't want to force them to do anything.

Little Sam feels that people can become better educated by reading, but if they order others about, without taking their own advice, he considers them ignorant. Sam believes a person is clever if he knows the rules of

existing authorities and how to circumvent these rules while pursuing his own interests. As Sam affirms:

> Parents influence you maybe, but they can't judge you out there—they're over there and we're over here, and they can't be after you all the time anyway. There's nothing you can't do when you want to do it.
>
> You have to be careful or you pay the penalty—like if you see a sign in the middle of the street, you have to look around before you pick it up, otherwise you pay the penalty.

By evading authority, Little Sam asserts his independence and the dignity or validity of his own way of life. He dislikes the thought of subordination, whether to friends, church, or welfare agencies.

Little Sam believes that his family has dealt effectively, pragmatically, and with some dignity in economic difficulties:

> My family is doing okay—they work with what they have, in other words they don't let the disaster pull them down. If my house gets burned, shit, I build another one, I make it myself. If they can take a nickel from you, they take it—I fight for it, it's mine. If they ask you for a cigarette—no, I say, go and work for it. I paid for this and it's mine, you buy your own.

At the same time, however, Sam's actions reveal the same patterns of dependency which are apparent in the behavior of the other Zavalas and in Barrio families in general. Sam maintains a close relationship with Esperanza; he visits her frequently and often leaves his children for her to babysit during the day. He is alternately affectionate and impatient with his four-year-old twin boys.

One evening, Little Sam's two boys scampered in to Esperanza's kitchen, legs and faces dirty. Esperanza exclaimed that they looked as though they had never been bathed. Sam apparently did not want the children in the kitchen and was irritated with them; "*Mira como andan!* (Just look at them!)," he said. Then Little Sam became playful, poking his sons in the ribs and receiving pokes in return. The children eventually retreated to another part of the kitchen to play together. Their father called to them to be quiet and they immediately obeyed.

The two boys found the small area under the table a fascinating place to play, but this again irritated Sam and he threatened "to use the belt" if they did not sit still. He called one of the twins to his side and had the child repeat words and sentences after him. Both Sam and Esperanza admired the child's aptitude, and Sam gave him a kiss on the mouth. The other twin, Sam III, was only asked to give his name, which he did not do well, and was then ignored. Margarita played with the twins, and from time to time—for no apparent reason—she would threaten "to get the belt." The children would then become less playful and more passive. At one point when she teasingly appeared with a belt in hand, the twins fled to a corner.

Little Sam spends a great deal of time with his Barrio friends, and yet he speaks disparagingly of them:

> In the neighborhood, it's rough. Nobody believe you, they have their own kids and I have mine. I smoke a cigarette with them, talk, have a good time. If they steal, you go and steal. If they smoke marijuana, then you go and smoke marijuana, huh. But I've got more sense than that. They think they're smart, but they're ignorance. Sometimes they get caught; they never caught me 'cause I never went in for that shit.

Little Sam indicates a need for close and dependent relationships, yet he fears that people will take advantage of him. With his friends he carefully keeps his distance; as he explains:

> If I have a friend I just sit and talk with him, but no more. I don't even bother with him. Maybe I drink with one or two of the musicians or the guy I played with or [illegible] years young, he's a good person, because it's a lot of ties. It's not like I need to be rude or something, you know? Let me tell you, I have lots of friends, but don't think that I stop and hobble on. I just pass them by and say hello unless I want to find something out. Some people buy people things and that's the reason they keep coming back, like a suit or something, like they can't do that to me. OK, so you have a hangover and come to me to buy you a beer, so I feel pity for you but I wouldn't buy you a beer—I would buy you a pair of panties or so. But you can't feel sorry for everybody. Like sometimes I'm drinking and get in a good mood, I invite everybody over for one beer, but then I cut them out. If they like it good, if they don't, to hell with you, are you going to do about it? I don't want nobody hanging on my back. They could be as mean as anybody else. Like I had a friend who was an expert. One day I [illegible] he found that the car was gone[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

I wish I could dream about my husband—I have only dreamed about him twice. I saw him walking across the street. I saw him so perfect, so nice, the same face. My daughter was coming with her baby in her hands. He walked to me instead of walking to her, and he held my face in between his two hands and kissed me; then he turned to my daughter and said, "I love your mother very much." I woke up fast.

Then another night I was working on the income tax papers and kept seeing his signature—I cried and almost went crazy. For a long time I couldn't go to sleep, then finally early in the morning I fell asleep and dreamed that the house was full of people. My husband came running in through the back door and told me he wanted me to come with him right away. I said, "Wait for me a few minutes, I'll go at once"—and then I woke up.

I wish I could dream of him more often. I wish he would talk to me and tell me what to do. When he was dying he didn't have a chance to talk—he died too fast. If only he had told me what he wanted me to do after he was gone, I would not be so lost now. I don't know what to do with myself. Everywhere I am I feel lost, so depressed. His second cousin tells me not to talk so much about him or else one of these days he'll appear. But I told her I was not afraid; I want to ask him what I should do next, whom I should visit. Then I would feel very happy. I have heard people say that the dead sometimes appear; I wish he would appear to me.

When her husband was alive, Esperanza always took care to be home to greet him when he returned from work, as Sam never liked to stay in the house alone. His one instruction she ignored was for her never to see her father—but whenever Sam found her visiting her father and ordered her home, she always came without argument.

Sam was the principal disciplinarian of his children. As Little Sam depicts him, "My father was very strict—he used to talk once and that's it. My mother's just there, that's all; she complains, we go to our room and he whips us—for bad words, just for bad talking. He was rough."

Once when one of Agnes' friends was visiting, the girl accidentally slammed the door on Agnes' finger. Sam became extremely angry with Agnes' friend and commanded her never to return to the house. She waited some time before returning, and it was only with Sam's silent admission of her presence that she felt free to come and go as before.

The earliest event in her life which Esperanza recalls with clarity was her mother's death during childbirth. Esperanza's father left her and her two brothers and two sisters with their grandparents in South Texas; he rarely visited his children. Eventually he remarried and had several more children by his second wife.

At the turn of the century when Mexico's history was marked by civil wars, Esperanza's grandparents crossed the border into South Texas. They settled on a ranch owned by German immigrants; when Esperanza's mother died, the five children remained with the ranch owners. This was a common occurrence; parents would desert a ranch, abandoning their children to raise themselves, marry, and spend their entire lives in the isolated ranch community working for the ranch bosses.

Esperanza remembers that she and her *hermanos* (siblings) lived as "peons—digging holes, washing their clothes, working in the fields, doing everything for them. We were very poor; we had no shoes, and we never saw schools—schools? Oh my God, we didn't even know what a school was."

They lived in the "trash house," so called because it lay near the trash dump. Their house had a dirt floor, and holes for windows which were glued over with flour paste and newspapers to keep out the wind. It was from these newspapers that Esperanza first began to learn to read. She recalls that she and her *hermanos* were well-treated by the Boss.

Esperanza's grandparents died when she was 15; an uncle then brought the five children to Houston. Esperanza rented a tiny room and took a job in a grocery store to support them all. The store owner was often drunk, and Esperanza was frequently left to manage the store alone. There she learned fundamental mathematics. None of the children spoke English when they first arrived in Houston. Without the aid of friends or relatives, Esperanza raised her younger sister and brother and earned enough money to send them both to school; the former graduated from a beautician school and the latter went to college. Esperanza believes, "I have always had good luck. I told my sister recently that we should give thanks to God because nothing bad has happened to us even though we grew up motherless without an education and our father never took care of us."

At 18, Esperanza married Sam, who was then 23. Sam's boss gave him a gift of ten pesos for their honeymoon, and the newlyweds' first action was to visit all of the groom's family. Sam had been raised by his grandfather, and before Sam and Esperanza were married they went to him to receive his blessing. That moment was imprinted in Esperanza's memory. "We knelt down in front of him to have his blessing. He was quiet for about five minutes and I thought he was going to say no, but finally he said yes. Later he told my husband that he had very good taste to marry me."

After receiving the blessing, Sam took Esperanza to meet all his relatives. Later, when Sam's grandfather died, Esperanza spent several weeks visiting her husband's family. Shortly before the wedding her own father had informed Esperanza that his house would be forever closed to her if she married; Sam never forgot, nor forgave, this. Esperanza expressed some of their newlywed sentiments thus:

> God helped us so much, because we didn't have anything, not a house, not a penny. I think my husband was praying. I was praying too, not to have children too soon. Who would take care of them? We did not have parents, and his grandfather was so old he could give us nothing but love, though that is everything.

Sam required his bride to stop working, even though the couple were very poor. They had no children for a while, and Esperanza raised her

sister's infant son. Five years after their wedding, Sam and Esperanza had their first son. "When I started to have my children, I thought I was a queen—everybody treated me and my children with such importance that I thought I had done something unique," Esperanza nostalgically reminisced.

Even though Sam still nurtured his hostility toward his wife's father, Esperanza managed to maintain some contact with him. Her children never visited their maternal grandfather, however, for they felt that "his house was not ours," but Esperanza dropped by occasionally with gifts of fruit and she sometimes nursed him when he was ill.

Esperanza's father was a handsome man, always well-dressed and neat. Esperanza emphasizes that "He always comes to *my* children when he needs something, not to his children from the second marriage; if they are busy working, they stop what they are doing." Even Sam has helped him in emergencies.

As children, neither Esperanza nor Sam had enjoyed any family closeness or cohesion; when they finally had children of their own, they wanted to create for them the ambience of family intimacy and unity which they had been denied. As their children grew up, Esperanza boasted, "We were always ready for everything, we were so organized. We would chaperone our children and their friends so that they could go to parties. Whenever someone invited us to a party or a wedding, there was the Zavala family together." Sam and Esperanza were less strict with their children than their guardians had been with them, and they were careful to discuss any topics that might lead to an argument between husband and wife only after the children were asleep. As Esperanza carefully explained:

> You should bring up a child to be considerate, respectful, and know the meaning of love. They should confide in you by talking to you about their problems. You could be like a friend to them.

Sam proved to be a good, protective, and generous husband. Upon one occasion, when his brother José came to the house half drunk and demanded five dollars from Esperanza to redeem his laundry from the cleaners Sam took offense at his brother's tone of voice and hit him once so that he bounced against the wall and then a second time, saying, "Nobody's going to shout or talk back to my woman. *Aquí hay respeto!* (There is repect here!)." This tale was often repeated with relish by members of the Zavala household, even in José's presence. "Then he made you eat your hats," Little Sam reminded José at dinner one evening, some time after the elder Zavala's death. "There you were, crying and crying. Tears fell into your beans but you knew that what my father says goes. You had to eat the beans." "*Qué chulo era mi* brother (How sweet my brother was)," was José's response; "I wish he were here so that he could hit me again."

After dinner Esperanza stood for a while on the sidewalk chatting with José. He called her *manita*, an affectionate form of "sister." As he climbed into his truck, Esperanza shouted to her brother-in-law, "You're going to have to stop drinking, José. You know what drinking has done to your kidney, your stomach, and your liver. Some day we're going to find you dead, José. You hear me. You better stop drinking for your own good. And take care of yourself. Eat more. Look at the bones that you are." José lowered his head and started the truck. Esperanza sank down onto the bench in front of the house. The truck sped off, and she watched as the dust it raised in the street traveled to the corner, settled, and then disappeared. The shadow of the viaduct loomed over the entire street.

After Sam began to earn more money in their early married years, Esperanza noted that he bought her many things:

> He always put me first. He bought me a new car, equipped with air and everything, but for himself he got an old truck. Many husbands are disgusted because their wives get old, but one thing I am very satisfied with is that when he died, he had been happy with me for all these years.

Sam Zavala died soon after the couple's 31st wedding anniversary. For some time they had been preparing for their 50th anniversary, scheduled to be an elaborate affair. Esperanza planned to wear a gold dress and to fill the church with gardenias, Sam's favorite flowers, which she had been planting for years both inside, outside, and all around the house. The gardenias were one reason Sam had always wanted to remain in the neighborhood.

On the evening of her husband's death, Esperanza was knitting a sweater for him, a project she kept a close secret in order to surprise him at Christmas. Sam came home from trucking vegetables with Roberto and went into the kitchen to wash his hands. Suddenly he collapsed with a moan that terrified Esperanza. She was the first to reach him. He was carried into the bedroom. Esperanza painfully recalls:

> I put my arms around him and kissed him. Tears were running down his cheeks and he told me not to cry, he thought they were my tears. He asked me to press his head tightly and said he was afraid he would die.

Sam was rushed to the hospital emergency room.

> The doctor came out and said he would probably only live another two hours, but he lived for five and a half hours. When the doctor told me he had died I thought it was the end.

When her husband died, Esperanza was plunged into a deep depression which only gradually subsided. A psychiatrist prescribed some pills for her which she took until Little Sam informed her that they probably contained addictive drugs. Her husband's death was a subject to which

Esperanza constantly returned even after she had passed the initial months-long depression that followed upon the misfortune.

Esperanza's children were impatient with their mother's lengthy period of mourning and her acute grief. They could rely upon security resources other than their father, but for Esperanza, Sam had been almost the sole source of security. Roberto called his mother at the time of Sam's death to explain that he considered himself blessed in one sense because, until his father's death, Roberto had never had any cause for disillusionment. It was difficult for Roberto to accept the thought of all the men who had no family, no one who cared for them; why did it have to be his father, why not one of them? Nonetheless, he had managed to resign himself to the fact of his father's death, and he urged his mother to do the same.

From her children's memories, Esperanza extracted and savored little remarks that Sam had made to them, poignant anecdotes of their life together, which happy era constantly occupied Esperanza's thoughts. Rosa told Esperanza that Sam had once confided to her, "I love your mother so much. I cannot tell you how much I love her. . . . If I die, I want you to take care of your mother." To his friends, Sam had observed that when the time came, he wanted to die peacefully, preferably in his sleep.

Before her husband's death, Esperanza often attended funerals so that the Zavala name would be respected. Afterwards, however, she only entered the cemetery for solitary and solemn visits to her husband's grave. This she did regularly, usually while her children were in school. Margarita frequently went by herself to the cemetery and explored the entire area; she was curious about how bodies were placed in the catacombs; she noticed that many of the expensive crypts bore Italian names. Agnes and her friends often stopped at the cemetery on their way shopping.

When the girls were home for summer vacation, however, Esperanza did not frequent the cemetery as often; when her daughters returned to school, her visits remained infrequent. Whenever Esperanza did pay a visit, however, she very carefully kept the grave free of grass.

The Zavala children continued to maintain the same authority patterns that had prevailed during Sam's life. Esperanza's stepmother, for example, called her to say that she had dreamed of Sam and that he had ordered Esperanza not to visit her father again. Esperanza's children sometimes brought up the subject, usually jokingly, of Esperanza's household rights, which Sam had always protected: she was to be respected and obeyed by her children.

José told the family one evening that as José was driving his truck, Sam had appeared to him. According to José's description, the apparition was perched on the hood of the truck so that José could not see the road. "I nearly had a wreck," he declared, as though that fact should provide proof enough that the event actually occurred. However, the apparition

had said nothing, and after it vanished a sulphurous smell lingered in the air. At this point in José's account, the family was silent; they all knew that only souls returning from hell to visit the living trail behind them the burning odor of sulphur.

The elder Zavala's death marked the beginning of increased interpersonal tensions within the family. Family members became more susceptible to the tension-laden outbursts which often result when excessive intimacy becomes uncomfortable. Esperanza senses the jealousies that exist between her children and the discomfort they experience when she is now not quite as generous with her time or her possessions as previously. She muses:

> I pray very hard so I can be recovered so that the family can return to the same harmony. But now I have to be myself, that's everything. I feel so tired. I'm in no mood for everyone getting together. Pedro says I act like this because I feel sorry for myself. Maybe it's true; but I feel like something is missing. My children used to come and go whenever they liked; they could take whatever they wanted, there were no restrictions. But then I was protected by my husband; now I am insecure. I am alone, I don't have much income, and now I must be careful. When my husband died, I gave away what I had to my two sons—all his tools. I gave preference to them before I sold anything, and now I need everything I have left to help myself and my two girls. That's why the house is different, and it will stay this way until I feel more secure. But it's more than income—things cannot ever be the same as before. Faith is the beginning and the end of love. Where there is God there is always faith, and that is the way we live.

The Anselmo Longoria Family

Anselmo Longoria, a fifty-five-year-old routine-seeking streetcorner man, was born in Mexico but has lived in the Barrio for almost forty years. Like most other streetcorner men, he lives apart from his family. From his $200 monthly salary he gives $40 to his former wife for child support.

Although Anselmo and his wife Elena were divorced shortly after the birth of their first child, Elena moved into a Barrio rooming house to remain near her ex-husband. When a second child was born to the divorced couple, however, Elena returned to live with Anselmo at his shoe repair shop. Later she moved to an apartment in the neighborhood, then to a public housing project. Her parents, who were Barrio residents before construction of the freeway, now live in the North Side. Elena and Anselmo had moved to Houston from Galveston (fifty miles away) shortly after their marriage so that Elena could be nearer her mother.

Elena and her two children have been greatly disappointed with the public housing development. They know few people there, and most daily they walk more than a mile, either to the North Side to visit relatives, or to the Barrio to visit Anselmo.

A small monthly check from Anselmo and a monthly welfare check constitute the family's only income. Elena's older child, Lena, is not working now. Lena does not like to go alone to hunt for work. In the past, her father always found employment for her, and she now hopes her aunt,

Guadalupe, will help her find a job. Lena enjoys an informal relationship with her aunt and is considering moving in with her to help care for Guadalupe's two little girls. The niece displays an intimate knowledge of her aunt's activities:

> Let me tell you—she and I get along all right. But she and momma get everything jumbled up. Guadalupe is really a mess. She's the one with blond hair. Her husband's in all kinds of trouble—financial trouble. You see, he used to be married before and his other wife is bothering him to give her money because he had a little girl by the other woman. Every time that Guadalupe leaves him he comes to Houston or he calls long distance, asking her to come back to him. And she goes back with him, and they'll be together for a while, and then she'll separate from him again for several months. She was telling me the other day about taking out a legal separation so that he won't be bothering her anymore. And she says that this time she's going to get a divorce.
>
> Now, I don't know if I should tell you—Guadalupe is running around with another man. The other day we were going to the drive-in—that's what we do a lot, we go to the drive-in and we have a couple of beers and fried chicken or something like that. Well, we had a flat. A fireman came and fixed the flat, but he said to Guadalupe, "You're driving on borrowed time, because the rubber is coming off the tires." That's because she drives to San Antonio and back so much. The man that she's running around with is supposed to get some tires for her.

Elena is concerned for her sister:

> When Guadalupe and her husband used to live in Houston, they used to run a cafe. They were real happy and they used to both run the place together. They even bought a big house, a big brick house, they say, when they moved to San Antonio. But I've noticed a change in my sister. She isn't happy like she used to be. You already know that she is running around with some men. I think it's because of those birth control pills she takes. I look at my sister and I see that she is nervous all the time and she can't sit still. I think she got that way since she started taking those pills. That's why she can't get along with her husband.

As with the Zavalas, familial dependency is also evident in the Longoria family. In numerous activities, whether simple chores such as going to the store or the more complex task of seeking employment, family members elicit extensive participation and aid from relatives. As a result, interpersonal relations within the nuclear and extended family often assume soap-opera dimensions and relations are easily strained. Such familial stresses are reflected in Elena's conversations:

> You haven't been trying to call us, have you? Because if you have, nobody has been answering the telephone at my mother's. They locked up the phone in a room so that nobody will be calling and bothering them. Well, it's because Guadalupe's husband called from San Antonio and said he wanted to talk to one of his daughters. That made Guadalupe so mad! Hay!
>
> We're having family troubles right now. That's why I don't feel too good. You see we went over to my mother's—and they're old people and everything gets on their nerves—and Guadalupe's been leaving her kids over at my mother's babysitting. The kids get on their nerves. My little boy was over there playing with them and he knocked over a

lawn chair. You know that any little boy will do that. Well, my father started cussing at him. That was no reason to cuss at a little boy. When Guadalupe came back she got real mad because my father talked that way in front of her girls. I don't think I much blame her.

Anyway, Guadalupe said that she was going to pick up Lena in half an hour, that she was going for a little while, and she never came back. That made Lena mad, and that's why she's gone to bed. She's asleep now, and she'll be all right when she wakes up.

A few days later, however, Elena reported: "*Ya se me pasó la pena* (My trouble is over now). You know how it is. Some days you have something on your mind." Part of Elena's worry may have been related to the tardiness of her welfare check; when the money finally arrived, she and the children rode the bus to town to buy groceries and window shop. Elena often also worries about her son, Anselmo, Jr.:

I want to tell you some things about my boy. He's not like other boys. When I was expecting him I used to take some pills so that I wouldn't have him. My husband didn't want me to have any more children. I don't know. Maybe something went wrong.

My boy is different. He's delicate, and he doesn't play with other boys. Little girls come here to the door and say "Can Anselmo come out and play?" but the boys around here don't ask him to come out and play. One day he was standing at the door and this little boy was walking by. Anselmo said something to him, but he just walked by and didn't say anything to him.

Over at the old ward Anselmo used to play with this colored boy. They told me that they used to put on dresses and dress up like girls, but I've never seen my boy do anything like that. They used to play together and go into the doghouse and hide in there. I didn't think anything of it, but one day, when I was at school, I told the teacher that my boy played with a little colored boy and oh! They made me see a counsil or a consul—or whatever you call it. I told her and they even made an appointment for me to see a psychiatrist. Well, to make a long story short, this psychiatrist talked with my boy for a little while, about half an hour—and they even paid this man about $100 or more to talk to my boy—and he said "There's nothing wrong with this boy." He knew right away. I never saw my boy put on dresses, but Anselmo is different than other boys. He's delicate and . . . . .

After that we didn't let Anselmo play with the colored boy any more. When a little girl came and told us that Anselmo was under the bridge with a dress on, when he came home Lena took the belt out and started hitting him hard, real hard. The more I hit him the more angry I got. I hit him with that belt so hard.

My little boy then started playing with another colored boy. My husband used to say, "Why do you let Anselmo play with the colored boy out on the sidewalk?" I think that my boy should play with whomever he wants to play with. I don't know why but the Spanish boys don't want to play with my boy.

Although Anselmo, Sr. does not live with his family, he contributes to their support; other families in El Barrio are not so fortunate. In the Longoria and other households, the high degree of dependency and reciprocity both within and between the nuclear and the extended family is obvious. Quarrels are commonplace, but this does not necessarily indicate

structural disruption. Indeed, the family is the major source of emotional and material security, and family members often do not consider themselves members of any solitary group other than the family.

The lack of any organization beyond the nuclear and extended family is one index of the "culture of poverty." According to Lewis (1966: XLVII) "it is the low level of organization which gives the culture of poverty its marginal and anachronistic quality in our highly complex, specialized, organized society."

This concept of "culture of poverty" is presented in greater detail in the following portrait of Jesús de la Cruz and his family.

The Jesús de la Cruz Family

> The culture of poverty is both an adaptation and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position in a class-stratified, highly individuated, capitalistic society. It represents an effort to cope with feelings of hopelessness and despair which develop from the realization of the improbability of achieving success in terms of the values and goals of the larger society (Lewis 1966: XLIV).

The de la Cruz family occupies one of the five small rented houses which share a block with several dilapidated warehouses. The corner house is deserted and irreparably deteriorated. The de la Cruz family lives in the second house, whose ragged screen door overlooks a large depression created by freeway excavation—"the pit," as it is referred to in the neighborhood. Beyond the pit, the skeleton of the new freeway is profiled in concrete columns against the downtown skyline. Inside the house, ventilation is poor; consequently, Jesús de la Cruz spends much of his time simply lounging on the small front porch, which also doubles as Jesús' "workshop" for small carpentry jobs. The small house always seems on the verge of bursting at the seams with the pressure of the innumerable articles piled high in, on, and around it and the porch. Inside, clothes peek from drawers or lie stacked in corners. Josephina, Jesús' wife, irons in the living room where she can watch television.

Like most Barrio families, neither Jesús nor his wife belong to any church organizations, social groups, or other formal associations. This minimum or absence of participation by the poor in the major institutions of the larger society—whether due to low income, ignorance, suspicion, or ineligibility—is characteristic of the culture of poverty.

Jesús' ignorance of immigration procedures caused problems during his first few years in the United States. Although Jesús believes that it is advantageous for Mexicans to become United States citizens, all that the naturalization procedure is "easy," not until his late fifties did he finally apply for citizenship, but he "got sick" before taking the test.

When Mexico's economy faltered during the Cardenas regime, Luis, then in his early thirties, decided to move to the United States. He crossed

the border into Brownsville, Texas, where he took a construction job which paid him the largest salary he had ever earned. Jesús revisited Mexico frequently and hoped eventually to bring his family to the U.S. Once, unclear about American immigration rules, Jesús stayed too long in Mexico and missed the required annual alien registration. Finally, however, he was allowed reentrance to the country and lengthier stays in South Texas.

The son of a carpenter, Jesús de la Cruz was born in 1906 about 250 miles from the Mexican-U.S. border in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. He was the third son, fourth child, in a family of six. When Jesús was two, his family moved to Ciudad Victoria, the state's capital. Jesús grew up during the explosive decade from 1910 to 1920, when one revolution after another wrought economic and social havoc throughout Mexico.

In order to support his family, Jesús' father moved periodically in search of work. Although Jesús was eligible to advance to the fourth grade, he left school to help his father and brothers full-time in the former's carpentry shop. In school he learned rudimentary mathematics; at home he read Mexican history which, decades later, he still retains in fragments about the ancient "Chichimecas" and "Toltecas," Christopher Columbus, and Maximilian's empire. He was a very serious child, he says.

Jesús' childhood home was small and cramped for a large family. His father had built it by placing adobe between standing trees to form the walls, next plastering them with a mixture of dirt, water, and grass; the roof consisted of tree branches and palm leaves. The children gathered long, thorny vines to roast among the coals until the spines could be removed and the resulting mass of "strings" used to weave and tie the palm leaves together in overlapping patterns. As a finishing touch the edges were slashed with a machete. "Not so good-looking from the inside," said his father, "but outside it looks very good, and it won't leak for anything in the world."

From his father, Jesús learned the value of possessing one's own tools. Years later, Jesús always proudly furnished his own electric tools on construction jobs. He feels this afforded him relative independence, for he required nothing of anyone; he carried his livelihood in his car and could move on when he pleased.

All the de la Cruz sons assisted in the carpentry shop. Jesús first learned to help construct iron-banded wheels. With a water-filled cow's horn punctured at one end he wetted down the iron his father heated over a wood-burning fire.

With the pressure of the family's crowded lodgings, the eldest son eventually established his own shop and the youngest son moved in with him. The family nonetheless continued their close association. Even after the boys began working elsewhere, they brought their entire salaries home to their parents. When Jesús obtained a government position salaried in gold coins, these too were turned over to his father.

Jesús' father was quite strict with his children. The following anecdote is recounted as an illustration. *Serenatas* (serenades) were given almost nightly in the town's central plaza. Sixty musicians and their wooden music stands clustered about the conductor; their "wind music," as Jesús called it, was audible for kilometers. Single men and families came to listen and to promenade in long lines around the plaza. If Jesús wished to join the promenade, he first had to obtain his father's permission. "If you want to go, go ahead, but be back at this hour," his father admonished. His mother, a strong woman and fairly influential in family decisions, always supported her husband: "Did you ask your father's permission? Well then, go ahead, but be careful—don't go with that boy or this one." Invariably, if Jesús returned a few minutes late, his father was waiting: "Next time don't ask me permission, because I won't give you any." Somehow, though, Jesús usually managed to regain his father's favor *and* permission.

In 1920, 14-year-old Jesús shouldered an increasing share of the carpentry work. He also worked for *los federales*, the existing government. The opposing politicos commonly cut down telephone lines to interrupt government communications and Jesús' task was to walk the lines and repair the damage. The telephones were of the early crank-up kind and the poles were raw crooked shafts brought directly from the forests where they were cut. Jesús sometimes walked all day between the various small towns before locating the severed line. When the *federales'* government fell, Jesús resumed full-time carpentry.

Porfirio Díaz was dictator of Mexico prior to 1910 when his government collapsed under the weight of public dissatisfaction with policies which allowed foreign investment in Mexico and with land policies which consolidated public properties under the private ownership of a few thousand people. From 1910 to 1920, a number of governments rose and fell: the idealist Madero ousted Díaz and was in turn dethroned by Carranza, who was then deposed by his own general, Obregón. Across Chihuahua state and through the southern mountains galloped the outlaw heroes Pancho Villa and Emilio Zapata in a crusade for land reforms.

The common people of Mexico suffered most during the seemingly endless blaze of internal strife. Jesús recounts the hardships involved in procuring even the essentials of existence. Flour, beans, and corn were strictly rationed from wagons which traveled among the villages. Corn, less expensive than flour, was cooked with slaked lime, then pulverized and placed beside the fire in a large wooden bowl. Later it would be made into tortillas and cooked on flat clay, rather than iron, pans. Every morning Jesús' mother, basket on arm, trekked off to purchase the day's supplies: small quantities of eggs, tomatoes, onions, lard, and chile from the farmers, and rations of corn and beans from the wagons.

"How different everything was then," Jesús reminisces. "In those days

meals and food were very nourishing. There weren't as many sicknesses as now. Nowadays people go to the hospital at the first little trouble." However, Jesús also recalls the family's ill-fated stay during the 1920's in a riverbank town invaded by yellow fever. The entire family, which had moved there in search of employment, picked bananas on the nearby plantations, but the spreading disease made work impossible. Boiled watermelon constituted the only medication then available.

During this time, the second de la Cruz son disappeared. Though his body was never recovered, he was believed to have perished in a river accident. Soon after, the de la Cruzes returned to their previous home. There, Jesús' father (indeed, the entire family) turned to coffin-making for, with revolution and disease, Mexico had more need of coffins than wheels. The coffins were ornamented with crosses and angels, displayed and sold to passers-by.

After several years, however, the elder de la Cruz resumed general carpentry work, and when an occasional coffin was ordered—usually for a hanged man—his sons did the work.

Still, jobs were scarce. In search of construction work, Jesús' father sometimes traveled to fairly distant parts of Mexico, and finally, when his grown sons could support the family, to the United States. His wife waited patiently without complaining to her children about their father's absences. At the end of a year, the elder de la Cruz returned with enough money not only to outfit his shop with new materials, but also to enlarge the family's cramped quarters. Then, when Jesús was 19, the entire household—including the elder brother who had opened his own shop—moved again.

On a construction job in a small South Texas town, Jesús met his future wife, Josefina. One of many daughters of a mother who worked long hours in a warehouse, Josefina had been raised in an isolated south-Louisiana swamp. Jesús, Josefina, and her family all occupied the same aging apartment building. After the young couple were married in the Catholic Church, the new bride simply transferred down the hall to join her husband. Jesús often sought advice from his mother-in-law. Early in the marriage a baby girl was born but died of pneumonia in infancy.

Jesús and Josefina eventually moved to another town. There, as the only Mexican among the laborers, Jesús worked more than a year to help build a Catholic church. He recalls with pleasure his special carpenter's outfit. Jesús became quite involved with the project. The manager seemed pleased to find a highly motivated worker and would sometimes place Jesús in charge of various tasks and other laborers. Photographs were taken at different phases of the church's construction. Jesús ordered a complete set.

Jesús still frequently visited his family in Mexico and often aided his

parents in serious financial straits, as during his father's long illness. Jesús' now-married sisters lived near their parents and his brother owned a piano-and-furniture shop. About a year after his second child, Ana, was born, Jesús learned that jobs were plentiful and well-paying in the big cities. Thus, in his early forties, Jesús came alone to work in Houston where, however, he soon earned enough money to rent an apartment in El Barrio and send for his family. They travelled to Houston in a truck which shuttled between the small towns and the city. Jesús discussed with his wife the idea of his family's moving from Mexico to live with them.

Just as the new residents were settling into El Barrio, Jesús' brother wrote that the elder de la Cruz was dying; Jesús reached his father in time to receive the latter's final blessings. "I told my brother, I will give you everything I have left. I gave him $50, which was a lot of money there, so they had enough money to bury him. I only had my ticket to go back." From Houston, Jesús intermittently sends small sums for maintenance of his father's grave.

Jesús claims he was his mother's favorite child; he visited her often, especially when she was ill. An unusually long silence from his family in Mexico was broken by his sister's urgent missive that their mother lay on her deathbed. Although his sister had written previously imploring Jesús to come at once, the letter had been lost. The son arrived one day too late to find his mother already dead and buried. Jesús has always regretted the delay which kept him from his dying mother. Since then, his trips to Mexico, and even his letters, have ceased.

One of Jesús' first steady jobs in Houston involved heavy loading and hauling. However, after his leg was broken when an auto struck him, Jesús accepted a previous job offer at a gas station. Although he was to be hired "temporarily only," Jesús worked there more than ten years. Though his salary was poor, it included free lodgings in a house adjoining the gas station. Occasionally Jesús also did carpentry work for his employer. When a new owner, with his own employees, later rented the station Jesús lost his job.

By now, the de la Cruz family numbered nine. Jesús became a yardman in a Catholic school. Six short months later, however, the new gas station manager asked Jesús to return, which the latter did "in triumph," and, because the owner lived far from the station, Jesús was left "in charge of everything."

Unfortunately, Jesús was subsequently incapacitated with an ulcer and hospitalized for several months. When he finally returned to work he found the station much dilapidated, with gas leaking from holes in the tank. Also, the owner sliced Jesús' salary in half to pay a newly-hired Negro man. Knowing nowhere else to turn, Jesús remained at the station despite his now meager wage and the negligence with which it might or might not

be paid him. When the station finally closed down permanently, Jesús sought legal assistance to collect his back wages; but his employer consistently evaded the court's ruling, and Jesús eventually despaired of legal proceedings.

Jesús returned to janitorial work in a nearby school, but after a month severe pains in his back forced him to quit. Now, a nightmarish pattern took hold of Jesús' life: he would obtain a janitorial position only to lose it shortly thereafter when the pain in his back grew unbearable; after a week's rest, however, the pain would subside and Jesús would find fresh employment only to begin the cycle anew. Eventually, the pain became Jesús' constant companion and he shuttled in and out of hospitals. Finally, Welfare sent him his last check and advised that his sixth-grade daughter, Ana, go to work. So, Jesús procured a job for her as a laundry maid in a hospital.

Now, at the age of 61, Jesús de la Cruz is somewhat stooped and subject to back and other ailments. His wife has just undergone several operations. The 17-year-old Ana—whom her brothers now address as "nurse"—still works as a laundry maid to earn the family's sole income, a scarce $25 a week. From this lean salary, Ana herself retains only a few dollars as a deposit for some garments in lay-away.

Jesús believes that Spanish-speaking workers must strive harder than Anglos to get ahead, mainly because the former have no money. Negroes, he feels, hinder the Mexican-American's progress. Jesús resents the fact that a Negro family recently moved in around the corner, and he complains that their children do nothing but run around all day and cause trouble. According to Jesús, they have smashed all the windows in the dilapidated, deserted house next to his.

Jesús has suffered such numerous hardships that even minor troubles now assume for him gigantic proportions and he is almost persuaded to "give up." A slight injury he recently sustained when his 12-year-old son accidentally stepped on his father's foot is unduly magnified in the light of Jesús' financial straits, his back trouble, and other difficulties. Another minor incident which greatly irritated him occurred when, upon requesting busfare from a priest, the latter gave Jesús too little money for the roundtrip. Such minor events accumulate and aggravate Jesús' already acute worries.

In the preceding pages, a portrait of the life of Jesús de la Cruz, as he perceives it, has been painted. All men doubtless retouch their self-portraits and it may be safely assumed that some of the hues in the spectrum of Jesús de la Cruz' memory have been differentially shaded or brightened in order to sketch a satisfactory self-image. To this self-portrait, however, must be added the views of others regarding Jesús: such supplementary "perspectives" were obtained through interviews with four of his children and through observation of his wife's role in the household.

Josefina is about ten years younger than her husband. It is principally through Josefina's efforts that whatever degree of familial cohesion currently exists was achieved. When Jesús whiles away most of his days either sitting on the porch, lounging in a nearby store, or consuming "soft drinks" in the local cafe, Josefina, often armed with a miniature whip slung over one shoulder, is with the children constantly.

Josefina was raised in a small community where families were expected to aid one another in times of need; thus, it is from the maternal side of the de la Cruz family that help materializes in the form of food, money, and labor. When Josefina fell ill, her mother assisted with the meals and the children. Josefina's sister also stops by quite frequently.

The de la Cruz family is several months behind in their rent and gas payments. At one point the electric company threatened to discontinue service, but Jesús managed to borrow enough money from his wife's relatives to pay the debt. Occasionally, his wife's aunt sends the family potatoes; his wife's brother-in-law sometimes obtains free vegetables where he works and he, too, donates what he can to his sister's household. From Welfare, the family receives intermittent rations of flour, butter, milk, and sugar.

Jesús is sometimes forgetful in his conversations and Josefina occasionally speaks for him or clarifies some point. Although the family has been criticized for accepting charity, Josefina is well-liked by many people. She visits regularly with her next-door neighbor and the two gossip and listen to the radio. Once, when her neighbor was quite ill and again, later, when the neighboring couple were separated, Josefina cared for their children. Such actions on Josefina's part prompted her neighbors to observe, "People like that you can't pay even with money. They are pretty bad off, very poor, but they are nice people."

It is difficult to gauge to what degree Josefina is dissatisfied with her family's situation or is critical of her husband. Jesús may perhaps drink a little too much, or complain of his various ailments, or color his accounts of his experiences so as to present himself in the most favorable light. Nonetheless, Josefina's marriage, her lack of education, her isolated upbringing, her immersion in an English-speaking environment and, finally, her cultural beliefs in male superiority and female submission, together severely delimit Josefina's choice of attitudes toward her family's condition and her husband.

In the culture of poverty, a predisposition toward authoritarianism and male superiority coexists alongside a female- or mother-centered familial emphasis. Jesús considers his the most influential voice in family decisions, much as his father was the central familial figure with absolute authority. Even though Jesús believes he was raised quite strictly, he maintains that his own children are receiving an even stricter upbringing. A well-trained child, in Jesús' opinion, behaves himself, obeys his parents, and discriminates

right from wrong. In actuality, however, only Mario, Jesús' twelve-year-old son, is disciplined primarily by his father. Mario grumbles that Jesús always yells at him when he misbehaves, whereas nine-year-old Carlota and the seven-year-old twins are instead reprimanded by Josefina or their grandmother. The worst thing imaginable to Mario is to be struck by his father; Jesús spanks Mario if the son comes home late or fights with his siblings.

The de la Cruz children occupy differing positions within the network of familial authority, and the various functions subserved by the wielding of authority (punishment, reward, and information-giving) are fulfilled for each family member in a variety of patterns. Although his father punishes Mario, his mother sets the hour he must return home; she also collects the money he earns shining shoes and running errands. Mario's big sister Ana is his confidante and informational source.

Carlota is scolded by both her mother and grandmother, though only the former tells Carlota when to come home. Carlota receives money from her father; when she has questions, she asks her teacher. The twins receive instructions from Carlota and Mario, and money from their father; they show their homework to Ana for approval.

Carlota seems to be the favorite of both parents. She claims that they punish the other children, but never her. Carlota wants to be like her mother, whom she assists around the house and to whom she displays her schoolwork.

Mario also helps out at home by sweeping outside and raking leaves. Occasionally, too, he prepares his own meals, whereas the other children always rely on either Josefina or their grandmother to fix their meals. Besides Ana, Mario is the only child who earns any money; the others only play, usually in the park or under the Valhalla Viaduct. When asked to make three wishes, Mario first wished that his father would get well and return to work; secondly, Mario hoped his father would not get into trouble. Mario's third wish was for a bike.

As evidenced in two of Mario's wishes, children tend to be caught up in the adult world of economic and other worries. This tendency forms part of the pattern of an unprotected childhood and it is readily observable in various situations. For example, when asked whom they considered a great person, the seven-year-old twins named a 38-year-old man who has assisted the family with food and money.

Minimal literacy and little and/or poor education, other common features of the culture of poverty, characterize the de la Cruz family. Josefina received no education and both she and her husband speak only Spanish. Jesús is aware of the larger society's emphasis upon the immense value of education and maintains that his children should speak English and obtain as much schooling as possible. Mario has absorbed his father's professed values and states that he would like to attend college. However,

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also characteristic of the culture of poverty is the discrepancy between the verbalization of, and the actual everyday implementation of, middle-class values. Actually, Jesús expects Mario to quit school as soon as the boy is old enough to work. This same discrepancy between word and deed which the father exhibits is apparent in other ways. For example, Jesús declares that his greatest worries are economic; he considers removing his children from school because he cannot afford clothes for them. "Those things are very important to children," he explains. Yet he will appropriate his daughter's income to purchase liquor for himself or candy, cookies, and soft drinks for the younger children.

Jesús avows that he is still seeking employment, although all the jobs for which he has applied seem either too far away or too strenuous for his back ailment.

The fact that Jesús retained his Mexican citizenship, shifted jobs frequently, and depended upon an informal relationship with the gas station owner (in terms of exchanging labor for a low salary plus living arrangements), limited his access to financial aid. The eligibility of a person like Jesús for certain benefits—e.g., social security and unemployment compensation—is largely dependent upon such factors as whether the employer knows the regulations concerning these benefits and whether he deducts money from his employee's salary and processes the deductions through the proper channels. The Mexican value system emphasizes loyalty to one's employer; Jesús appeared reluctant to challenge the station manager on points which could be considered "rights." Even at his own request, Jesús salary was not increased; neither did he effectively dispute its halving. Finally, toward the end of his employment, even the unfortunate worker's legal protestations proved useless in obtaining his rightful wages. In addition to the problems raised by an alien values system, an economic system generally biased in the employer's favor must also be considered in such a situation as that described above for Jesús de la Cruz. The labor board, however, which usually administers such cases, is sadly lacking in real power to alleviate such injustices.

Unlike other poor families in El Barrio who are too proud to request aid outside their immediate family or neighborhood, Jesús solicits charity from both governmental and religious organizations. His relationship with welfare agencies accords with the larger portrait of the culture of poverty. Too often welfare institutions perpetuate an impression of hopelessness as a result of their limited assistance and policies which often infringe upon a family's privacy and sense of pride.

Because of his family's serious financial difficulties, Jesús de la Cruz has contemplated returning to Mexico. However, he has not visited his formerly numerous friends in Mexico for many years and, more important,

he has lost all contact with his siblings there. Thus, his plan appears to lack any firm basis in reality.

Jesús believes that religious training is very important for children, to teach them right from wrong, but he himself rarely participates in church activities.

At the family level, one index of the culture of poverty is a brief and unprotected childhood. Jesús entered his carpentry apprenticeship quite early and his wife was raised in a rancho community where children immediately assumed many adult responsibilities, e.g., caring for younger children. With Ana already employed at the end of the sixth grade and with Mario slated to start work as soon as possible, it seems that Jesús is raising his own children in much the same way that he and his wife were raised, even though he is aware of alternatives: "I will tell Welfare the children will have to quit school, maybe they can do something."

Within the culture-of-poverty family there is often a verbal emphasis upon family solidarity which, however, is rarely a reality because of sibling rivalry, attributable in part to competition for maternal affection. Jesús mentioned that he had been his mother's favorite. Although he never discussed family antagonisms, the fact that he lost contact with his siblings after both parents died seems suggestive of such rivalries.

How does Jesús negotiate the discrepancies between his ideals and his behavior, his marginality to the larger society, and the attendant sense of helplessness? As the individual matures, he usually evolves a set of ideals about how to live, what goals to set, how to raise a family, and so forth. When hardships make it difficult or impossible to attain these ideals, the individual must then modify his self-image or, as is more often the case, rearrange his perceptions of the world so that he may maintain a satisfactory self-image.

Jesús remembers himself as a curious, serious child who enjoyed spending time by himself and whose education was discontinued only because his family required his help during the hardships of the revolution. When he recalls the construction of the Catholic church, he mentions that he was the only Mexican among the workers; he also emphasizes, perhaps partly in response to any prejudice he may have encountered, his close working relationship with the manager:

> He was pushing everyone else to work, but not me. He was the one who used to read the plans for the construction and in the morning he used to tell me, Jesús, we will do this and do that today. I was always worried about what was going on. I used to read the plans, too, and see what to do next. I gave myself orders. Sometimes he used to send one or two men to help me do whatever was necessary. Later he was working in some school; one day I got a letter from him, a very big and nice letter, greeting me and asking me if I wanted to go to work for him again, that he would come to take me to work. But no, I couldn't go; by then I already had a baby daughter.

Jesús also stresses the independence which possession of one's own tools

affords: "I never liked to ask anybody for tools that I needed. I had my own, all kinds of tools."

At the gas station, after Jesús had been temporarily hired, fired, and then rehired, he said of himself, "No one could run the station as good as I did. I was in charge of everything." But when he requested a pay raise, the owner hired another man and cut Jesús' salary in half.

Jesús discusses in detail his tribulations in obtaining donations of food, clothing, and money from various organizations. For example, after describing to a priest the family's misfortunes and Jesús' fruitless efforts to procure employment, the priest gave Jesús a coupon for three dollars' worth of groceries, which Jesús collected and then walked the entire three miles back to El Barrio. Perhaps he emphasizes these experiences to mask his own attitudes, and those of his neighbors, towards accepting charity.

Jesús is convinced that he has done everything possible to cope with his problems and he sees his family as patient, accepting, and supportive of him. He does not seem bitter but rather resigned to his difficulties as a natural concomitant of human existence. Perhaps bitterness characterizes those who have suffered repeated disappointments throughout their arduous struggles towards a better life, whereas calm acceptance marks successful rationalization, an effective shuffling of personal responsibility onto the outside world. Jesús de la Cruz has been crucified on the cross of the cruel world, by external forces over which he can exercise no control. When asked how he will solve his family's economic predicament, Jesús simply answers, "Who knows what will happen?" and then excuses himself to go inside for a drink.

Child's-Eye Views of Life in an Urban Barrio

Studies utilizing children as informants (e.g., Leighton and Kluckhohn, 1947; Nadel, 1937; Dennis, 1940; Goodman, 1957, 1962, and 1964) focus not upon the mechanics of enculturation or upon adult attitudes towards and dealings with children, but rather upon the child's own view of the social scene. Children are an excellent and underutilized source of ethnographic information, for "what we can learn from child informants is unique and indeed indispensable to a comprehensive view of [a] society and culture. . . . That part of culture which is known to the child [must] . . . have a peculiar significance, since what is learned early is likely to be fundamental, pervasive, and persistent in the culture" (Goodman, 1960).

An interview schedule of 123 predominantly open-ended questions was given to three groups: lower-class Anglo, Negro, and Mexican-American children. Only the data from the Mexican-American children are presented here.

The interviews required from half an hour to an hour; the child informants

were highly cooperative throughout. They seemed surprised and often proud that their opinions were sought. The experience was both novel and enjoyable to them.

The Barrio interviewers were male undergraduate and graduate students bilingual in Texas Spanish and in English. The interviewers found ample use for both languages; two of the child informants spoke Spanish throughout the interview, and all of them used at least a sprinkling of Spanish terms, especially in references to kin and to food.

The interview schedule dealt primarily with factual matters such as lists of family members and accounts of the child's everyday home and school routines. However, judgments about "good" and "bad" people, good and bad "things to do," "best" and "worst" memories, and plans for the future were also solicited. A few questions were designed to sample the child's knowledge about the larger society (e.g., "What town do you live in?" "What state?" "Who is President of the United States?"). These questions were placed near the end of the interview lest the stigma of "test" inhibit communication.

The lack of stereotype in the responses was noteworthy. The children's spontaneity and candor were indeed remarkable. The protocols contain a wealth of detail which was largely preserved in the process of coding the responses. Although procedures of coding, tabulating, and analysis are not discussed here, it should be emphasized that the data reported in qualitative terms in the following pages is not impressionistic; it is based on careful coding and tabulation and subsequent analysis and grouping of the responses to each question into significant categories (e.g., child's-eye views of the physical world, the social world, and of the realm of values).[1]

Thirty-four school-aged children from sixteen households were interviewed. Seventeen boys and seventeen girls were well distributed across an age range of seven to thirteen.[2] The modal household had six children,

1. The occasional references to differences between groups (Barrio, Anglo, and Negro) are based on statistical significances. Where use of Chi was feasible, a rough approximation of differences required (translated to percentages) was arrived at by using Zubin's nomograph (in Oppenheim, 1966). Note also that a given difference (e.g., fifteen percentage points) may be significant at the extremes, where one of the percentages approaches zero or one hundred, but not in the middle ranges (Oppenheim, 1966:288). Here are presented sample values in the mid-range, the largest differences required for comparison of only two groups.

Significance Level	$N_1 = 34, N_2 = 43$	$N_1 = 17, N_2 = 17$	$N_1 = 20, N_2 = 23$
10%	58% and 42%	64% and 37%	63% and 38%
5%	62% and 40%	67% and 34%	65% and 36%
1%	65% and 35%	72% and 29%	69% and 31%

2. The intention was to interview all Barrio children of first through sixth grades. However, only 75 percent of the school-age children were interviewed.

although a few families had eight or nine, and a few had only two or three.

Only seven of the sixteen households consisted of simple nuclear families. In nine households there were grandparents or other relatives in addition to or (in two cases) in place of parents.

The parents of the child informants are poorly educated; their formal schooling ranges from zero to eleven years, with four to six years as the level most frequently attained. These children's fathers are unskilled laborers—construction workers, janitors, service station attendants, and the like. The most skilled and best paid father is a "plastic molder" who earns $89 a week and supports eight children, aged three to twelve, and a wife. Two other fathers, each with eight children of approximatley the same age range (3–12), support their families on $75 and $55 a week, respectively. Four mothers and one grandmother work outside the home.

Most of the children's families claim membership in the Barrio's small Catholic church. When asked, "What do you do on Sunday?," two-thirds of the children answered that they go to church. A nine-year-old and a twelve-year-old serve as altar boys.

Christian given names provide a small clue to family levels of acculturation. Of the children interviewed, two-thirds bore "Anglo" names or at least used Anglicized names (e.g., "Henry" for Juan Enrique).

The prevalence of *compadre/comadre* relationships, however, is one of many evidences of the retention of Mexican traditions. Nearly all adults claim one to four such relationships with people in the neighborhood or in other sections of the city.

There are no schools inside the Barrio. The majority of the interviewees attend one of three elementary schools located six to nine blocks from their homes, and all but two, who travel by bus to quite distant schools, walk to and from school. The routes lead across railroad tracks and busy streets. Most children take their lunches to school and do not return home until mid- to late-afternoon.

Home Relationships and Routines

The child's-eye view takes as its central focus the home; from it extend the wider worlds of neighborhood and school. What lies beyond is likely to be fuzzy even to the older children. The Barrio does not appear as a unit to the children, although their elders recognize it as a neighborhood with definite physical boundaries.

The child's personal world includes household members, friends, and close neighbors, all classified and clearly differentiated. These "significant others" are arranged by the child in his personal world—his social space—according to three dimensions: respect, authority, and affectionate warmth.

The respect dimension is closely linked with age. In general, the older a person, the more respect is due him. Grandparents are in no way deprecated by any of the children, and there were numerous comments suggesting deference. For example, one must not "talk bad" to grandmother. In one household "abuelita" (an affectionate term for grandmother) has her own bedroom, even though the rest of the family must sleep together in one other room. Many children say they love their grandparents, and often they make such comments even before mentioning resident parents.

Grandparents appear to be highly influential, as distinguished from powerful. The children express appreciation of their grandparents, e.g., because the latter teach them "what is right and not right," because "they are good with me and drag me out of bed," and because they are "fun." Many grandmothers and grandfathers work; this too is admirable. The children are also solicitous of their grandparents, e.g., it is a good thing "to save [pick] up my toys so Grandmother does not trip over them."

In the authority dimension the father takes precedence. He is seen as a somewhat distant but not easily forgotten authority. Nevertheless, the boys seem rather to slight him. Few say they go to him with questions, either for information or for permission to do something. Only four boys want to be like their fathers when they grow up. Two think father is great, but none plans on having a job like father's in later life. The certain remoteness between father and son may be due mainly to the former's frequent absences because of work or other activities. The father usually leaves home before the children awaken. Yet informants were sure to note whether he had supper with them, and they report that his homecoming usually determines suppertime.

The girls' attitudes toward parents are quite different. They more often speak of "mother and father" as an entity. They feel that their parents are equally available to answer questions. Four girls say they consult only father. None interpreted this as seeking his permission, however. Girls can describe father's work better than boys can.

Boys and girls agree on two roles for the male head of the household: family breadwinner and high court of discipline. The men of the family, either the father or grandfather, handle crises and major indiscretions—they stop rock fights, for example.

Mothers and grandmothers perform many domestic duties in the child's world. They prepare the breakfast, the "carried" lunch, after-school snacks, and supper—all of which are likely to consist of beans, tortillas, and rice. They do the dishes, sweeping and mopping, bedmaking, and "making everything clean for us," with help from the girls and, occasionally, from the boys. Mother sets the hours to get up, to come in from play, and to go to bed. She scolds, she sometimes slaps or spanks for disobeying small rules, and she stops squabbles between siblings. Even in the few

families where mother goes out to work, the children feel that her prime activity is at home.

In spite of the continuous and repetitive nature of mother's tasks she is not thought of as a drudge. "She's good and looks pretty." "She is always helping us and is a lot of fun." Toward their mothers and mother-surrogates the children feel a warmth and closeness, a strong bond of affection.

The strength of intrafamilial affection declared by Barrio children is conspicuous when compared with responses of the Negro and Anglo child informants. When asked, "Whom do you love?" not a single Barrio child included any but relatives in his roster of loved ones, not even a nonrelated peer or a close neighbor. In contrast, friends are important to Anglo children and Negro boys.[3] These findings might be dismissed as mainly indicative of a distinctive Barrio definition of "love" except that they are wholly congruent with the overall pattern of home-centeredness so evident in the Barrio protocols.

Older brothers, sisters, cousins, uncles, and aunts who are out of school are regarded in various ways. They are accorded mixtures of respect, affection, and some authority. Their jobs can be described explicitly, often more so than father's: "He [big brother] works in a furniture factory"; "She [older cousin] baby sits for a secretary"; "She [young aunt] types, copies whatever they tell her." Several girls hope to be like these slightly older relatives. These not-quite-adult members of the family are also looked upon as legitimate disciplinarians, particularly in settling quarrels between children.

The children equally praise and censure brothers and sisters of their own age range. They play together and fight together. One Barrio child calls her brother "stupid Negro," a label intended and understood as particularly insulting. The children tend to be highly critical of their nonrelated age mates, but not of the older young people.

The youngest members of the family are mother's responsibility, though many of the girls feel they actively share in caring for preschoolers. They give the little ones rides in wagons, teach them to play "catch," or simply make them laugh. The girls do not consider this a burden. They think

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3. Question #113: Whom do you love? (% of children giving response)

	Barrio		*Anglo*		*Negro*	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Relatives, only	88	88	44	20	53	94
Non-relatives and relatives	—	—	56	80	35	6
No one	6	—	—	—	12	—
No reply	6	12	—	—	—	—
	100	100	100	100	100	100

that even two-year-olds should know how to play, talk, walk, write, "color," and "be good." Only two children mentioned unpleasant things which two-year-olds may do: they know how "to bite" and "to fight."

Since most job-holding family members leave home before the children's breakfast, and since the school children are gone until afternoon, it is not until evening that the family has an opportunity to be together. Supper is a family affair; father's return from work sets its time, even though many children are indoors earlier, particularly in winter. The norm is that everybody eats together. The houses of El Barrio are small, the families large, yet only one comment was made regarding lack of space: "It gets kinda crowded sometimes."

Weekend routines, too, are home-centered. Saturday and Sunday differ from school days mainly in that more time is free for play, television, and household chores. In three families the children are sometimes taken to visit relatives in other parts of the city. Almost all the children attend church on Sunday mornings.

Television viewing is a favorite pastime at almost any hour—day or night—although Barrio people are most likely to watch in the evening, around suppertime and afterwards, when custom dictates "resting and letting the food go down." For children, the popular viewing times are, in order: early evening of any weekday, Saturday morning when cartoons follow one upon the other, afternoons after school, and anytime on Sunday. Only one family does not own a television, a deprivation sorely felt by the girls of the household. More than half the children stay up past nine o'clock to watch late TV shows. In the close quarters of the house, it might be surmised that the set is a dominant feature. It may be impracticable to restrict viewing hours. Bedtime is often determined by favorite programs. Only a few boys and girls spoke of doing homework or chores before watching TV. One child says she watches all the time, except, perhaps, when she is mopping in the kitchen and cannot see the set.

The boys prefer programs of high adventure and fighting. Girls have no taste for this; they prefer comedies, especially the family-situations shows. There is evidence that the children learn from TV about certain social types whom they are inspired to emulate. Models and ballerinas offer glittering occupational goals to some of the girls. The boys admire policemen, astronauts, and "Green Berets."

A few succinct statements selected from the protocols suggest salient features of relationships within the Barrio Home:

1) "My aunt protects me from my brother and sister, Mother takes me shopping, and Father gives money" (girl, age 10).

2) Q. "When you do something bad, who yells at you?"

A. "Almost everybody, because I am the littlest one" (boy, age 10).

3) "When I ask my grandmother a question, she says to ask my father and my father tells my big sister to go help me" (boy, age 9).

The boundary between the inner core of home and the periphery of neighborhood is blurred. In part this is because many neighbors are often also relatives. One boy, Eddie, lives with his grandparents, uncles, and aunts, just a block away from his mother, stepfather, and their children. Some neighbors of long standing may win the kind of respect and appreciation ordinarily reserved for relatives, such as one woman who has helped other families in times of trouble, and the "storekeeper lady" who gives fruit to the children.

The children discuss various incidents among themselves and form their own consensus regarding El Barrio society. For example, the story of one of Eddie's escapades, pieced together from interviews with several children, serves as a prototype of how the children share in neighborhood gossip. Eddie had saved up enough money to go to the movies and persuaded a friend to accompany him, at night, without first informing any adult. Eddie later admitted that this was a very bad thing to have done—to worry his grandparents, aunts, and uncles. His partner-in-crime was punished and Eddie "got in big trouble." Eddie's step-brother, who learned of the "big trouble," felt that Eddie was a very bad person to have stayed out so late. The step-sister agreed that it is wrong for someone to stay out late and worry everybody.

The boys respect certain rules, whose importance they explained. For example, rock fights are forbidden by Barrio adults; recently, the adults also forbade children to play in a ditch where road construction was under way. Intersibling quarrels are strongly discouraged but not severely punished in Barrio homes. When asked: "When you fight with your brother(s) or sister(s), what does your mother do?" the children, boys especially, reported that they are generally spanked or "hit," but not whipped. Anglo children claim they are likely to be whipped or scolded; Negro children of both sexes emphasize whipping ("whuppin"). Of the three groups the Negro children are most likely to be encouraged to "fight back."

In the Barrio

Other gossip, current at the time of interviewing, involved the arrival of several Negroes in the Barrio. Attitudes toward this event were mixed. Members of one Negro family had been seen fighting in the street. This the children found shocking. Fights should be confined to one's own house. If children fight, "We tell their parents, and they take them in and spank them."

The Barrio is a rather closed society and difficult for any newcomers, even Mexican-Americans, to penetrate. Two sisters, ages 8 and 10, who recently moved from their parents' home town some seventy miles away,

are keenly aware of their outsider status. They constantly and fondly recall life in their small native town. Jo Ann sighed, "I don't know where anyone lives here."

Although many transients and unattached inhabitants pass through the Barrio, the children did not comment about them. The small grocery store, a favorite stopping place in the morning, was often mentioned, whereas the Barrio's taxidance hall, or the bars, were not. The boys sometimes play soccer or baseball in the park. A pair of older girls, close chums, may stroll around the park. However, most of the children who play in the afternoons jump rope or play tag or "catch" around their own houses. "Indoors by dark, or when father comes home from work" is the rule.

In their movements through the neighborhood, Barrio children must certainly observe outsiders or undesirables, e.g., winos, prostitutes, and action-seekers of other sorts. Yet the action-seekers seem remote to the young, who are absorbed in childhood pursuits. The strict demarcation between Barrio "insiders" and "outsiders" no doubt also relegates the latter to the periphery of attention. The fact that most transients are men may also be significant, because children of the more stable families live mainly in a world of women. It seems likely that the boys, the older ones particularly, are well aware of the existence of street-corner men and other action-seekers and it is reasonable to suppose that some of the boys admire these types. The boys' complete silence in the matter suggests a careful avoidance and, perhaps, an already internalized male code of silence about men's pursuits outside the home.

There are "buffers" between the stable families and the action-seekers, but they cannot be depended upon fully to isolate children from the action-seeking society and mores. As children of the less cohesive families become older and less subject to family rules, some will probably join the action-seekers. The following two cases are illustrative of the many variables at work.

Eddie, who sneaked off to the movies, is in a difficult position. Like the children of one other household, he is cared for solely by his grandparents, but he is unique in that his younger step-siblings live nearby. The tightly-knit inner circle of El Barrio, with its common fund of gossip, accentuates the peculiarities of Eddie's position. Even if he is never the instigator of another cause celèbre, the "villagers" are not likely to forget his first, or any later, indiscretion. On the other hand, Eddie has a lot "going for him." He is responsive and intelligent. He feels a great deal of respect, affection, and appreciation for his grandparents. He is twelve years old now, and is an altar boy at church. He wants to be like an astronaut, but he only expects to finish high school and then become a fireman. Were he without notable personal resources, in three or four years

he might or might not identify with the action-seekers and their life style. In view of his assets, however, this seems unlikely.

The Coulombo girls, aged 8 and 9 years, are not as fortunate as Eddie. They have two younger sisters and three younger brothers bearing two other surnames. Theirs is probably the poorest home in the neighborhood and the only one lacking a recognized male household head. Mother works in a laundry during the day. The interviewer notes that one of the girls "was shy and reserved and sometimes barely audible," the other "loud and inattentive . . . sometimes her answers didn't make sense. Giggled a lot for no reason at all." Both girls are still in first grade. Having neither a cohesive family nor strong personal attributes, it is quite likely that these girls will gradually gravitate toward the action-seekers and will perpetuate their mother's life style.

El Barrio action-seekers are usually detached individuals, men and women who have no children, or none of school age living in the Barrio. Among the action-seekers are a few young toughs, street-corner boys, whose wives live in the households of their husbands' parents. Some have very young children. However, the seamy side of Barrio life—the life style sustained by resident action-seekers and action-seeking transients and visitors to El Barrio—is manifested by few of the adults who live in the households of this study's child informants. At home, therefore, the children are exposed mainly to a routine-seeking life style.

Outside the Barrio

The children's only regular trip outside the neighborhood is their daily trek to school. The trip is somewhat hazardous due to traffic, railroad crossings, and so forth, but it affords an opportunity "to play *con los muchachitos*" (with the boys and girls) and to savor little adventures, or such minor entertainments as "throwing mud at ants." In the morning the children stop at the store to buy something to add to lunch and to meet their friends. The passing vehicles are fun to watch, and if the first-graders cannot be trusted to stop and wait for traffic, older siblings look after them. The only potential danger the youngsters recognize is their tardiness should a long train block the railroad tracks they must cross.

From the child's point of view, school consists of two parts, work and play. Very few of the informants were enthusiastic about the work, but if requested to rank subjects, the boys favored arithmetic, the girls spelling and reading. Apparently no relationship exists between subject preference and whether a child is up to grade level for his age.

Evaluations of teachers' efforts are largely in terms of the "work" part of school. "My teacher is good, because she teaches us how to read and arithmetic," or "She lets us talk softly after we have finished our work." One teacher is a favorite because she lets the children stop at her home

for help after school. Teachers' disciplinary measures—yelling, spanking, and whipping—were reported by more than half the informants.

The play portion of school—recess, lunch hour, and just "fooling with friends"—is not considered a learning experience because it involves no work. Few denied, however, that it is the best part of school.

The schools the children attend are integrated and, in describing classmates, many informants spontaneously mentioned ethnicity. Only two stated a preference for Latins, however, and three thought the "other kind" (i.e., Negroes) were better.

Three-fourths of the children know that their parents and siblings care about their work and progress at school. Mother especially expresses interest, but only a third of the children reported comments as specific as "You ought to learn more." It is likely that few parents can give much help with homework, as inferred from their low average level of education and from remarks such as "My mother tells me if she knows," "My teacher tells me to look intc a book and find the answer," and "If it's not for school, mother will help me."

In the school world, the Barrio children are often at a disadvantage. Many attend summer school in hopes of catching up. Some have non-Barrio friends at school, e.g., "My best friend is John. I never go [to his house]. I just see him at school." The physical distance between school and home—some six to nine blocks—is much less than the social and cultural distance.

Throughout the interviews, the *muchachitos* illustrated that, from their vantage point, what is beyond El Barrio is far indeed. Small excursions loom large in their recollections: a class outing, a fishing trip with grandfather, a trip downtown with mother—these are big and important events. Only one child has been to Mexico, or anywhere else even slightly remote. The children's activities, interests, and heroes and models exist in the close-at-hand world of the Barrio. The children primarily admire members of their own households. Only a local garage mechanic, one teacher, and a few television characters figured as admirable nonhouseholders.

Values

The children's likes and dislikes, the people they admire or dislike, their hopes and wishes for the future, their views on what is good or bad—these provide major clues to their values. It is recognized that the informants no doubt largely enunciated ideal patterns which may diverge considerably from behavioral patterns. However, the ideal patterns offered by the Negro and Anglo children were quite different from those of the Barrio youngsters, and it is reasonable to suppose that the corresponding behavioral patterns differ too. Ideal pattern statements are prime indicators of the standards to which a people aspire and which are taught to children as proper. Without such standard-setting and teaching, children are unlikely to pay even lip

service to values which run counter to ego impulses, immediate gratifications, and the gross acquisitiveness which seems to appear in all urban industrial societies. Among Barrio, but not Negro and Anglo, children, the ideal patterns run strongly counter to these orientations.

The Barrio youngsters value their parents and other kin, of all ages; no one and nothing takes precedence over kin in their hierarchy of values. In this the Mexican-Americans are unlike the Anglo and Negro children, who are much more oriented toward age mates and friends.

For Barrio children the "good thing to do" is also the pleasurable thing. In this linkage they are not unlike the Anglo and Negro youngsters. But in the Barrio protocols there appears another value linked with the good and the pleasurable—an "others-orientation" reminiscent of that reported for Japanese children (Goodman, 1957). This others-orientation is a matter of concern for and sensitivity to the feelings and wishes of people who are important to Ego. It is evident in the Mexican-American youngsters' comments, such as it is good "to play *nice* with my sisters and brothers," "to play ball with the boys when *they* want to," to do well at school (responding to parents' wishes), to be obedient, and to help around the house. In this frame of reference the "bad-to-do" things are largely the reverse side of the same values coin; disobedience and "talking back" to elders are particularly "bad to do."

Work is valued. Barrio girls have more opportunities to work than do the boys, and more girls have earned money for their work. Both sexes accept work as they accept play, as an expected, a taken-for-granted, part of life. It is good to work, and bad if Father does not have a job. Work should not be avoided. In answer to the question, "At your house, who works and what do they do?" the Mexican-American children, unlike the Anglo and Negro children, included those who helped at home as well as the wage earners, e.g., "My father fixes refrigerators. My sister takes care of the [younger] boys when I'm not here" (girl, age 10).

The Mexican-American children perhaps value work less as an end in itself than as participation and contribution. In an industrial world's definition, work is closely allied with the acquisition of goods and status. However, most of these children, whether describing careers or tasks at home, stressed neither the activity itself nor the personal achievement but, rather, the contribution made. Within the family everybody works in his own way; this is a part of living, like enjoying family meals, a television show, or play with other family members. The children view their chores as "helping" in a larger endeavor, as part of the life at hand.

Power, wealth, prestige—these are either little valued or little pondered, as the Mexican-American children's modest aspirations would indicate. The future vocations the youngsters mention represent little upward mobility from the humble positions their parents fill. Television has fostered some

fancy, but most of the children think of their futures in terms of familiar professions, e.g., policeman, fireman, mother, secretary, teacher. It appears that in career plans there is a pervading caution. For girls, however, even to consider working requires a certain amount of daring because it is a departure from the roles of most mothers and most other adult women the girls know.

This same caution, the striving for goals within easy reach, is reflected in the responses to the query, "If you could make three wishes and get what you wished for, what would you wish?" Only one child wished for money. The greatest number of wishes were for small things—a doll, coloring books, a new pair of shoes, perhaps a guitar. The second largest body of wishes were either abstract—to be happy, smart, unafraid—or wishes for someone else—an education for my brother, for mother to be a teacher. In view of the modest circumstances of El Barrio it is perhaps not surprising that the children's wishes are also rather modest. In contrast, Negro and Anglo children in equally low economic situations tend to reach for the moon. Possession, power, and wealth are wholly disdained by Barrio children—e.g., "I wish for my father to have a Cadillac"—but such expressions are rare. Moreover, it should be noted that this wish was for the *father*, although the child was invited to state his wishes for himself.

CHAPTER III

MEXICAN-AMERICANS OF HIGH SCHOOL AGE

Ideas about the roles and value of formal education have been expressed so frequently in the United States that they have become platitudes. Those ideas nevertheless bear repeating here. Schools provide formal education and are also major agents of socialization. They serve as settings in which values concerning education, future occupations, and behavior in general may be transmitted. Persons of different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds are brought into close proximity in the schools, and ideas concerning status of self and group are thereby developed. One of the roles of schools is to prepare young people to participate in society as responsible, productive adults. Education is often referred to as the "key" to the doors of society. Graduation may be regarded as an initiation rite granting the initiate higher status than he previously held, as well as opening an expanded range of financial and social opportunity. This chapter suggests that as exemplified by the circumstances in Houston, urban American schools do not perform these roles very effectively for non-Anglo students.

In 1960, approximately eight percent of the Mexican-Americans in Houston—as compared with six percent of the city's total population—were of high school age. The number of Mexican-Americans who did not finish high school is proportionately greater than the corresponding number of Anglos. This high drop-out rate has been attributed to economic pressures, although some spokesmen for the Mexican-Americans complain that Mexican-American students receive poorer education than Anglos and thus are not motivated or adequately prepared to continue education through high school.

The high schools serving most of Houston's Mexican-American population are among the oldest in the city. The proportion of Mexican-American students in each school varies with the school's proximity to Mexican-American neighborhoods. Grant High School, the only school within a predominantly Mexican-American neighborhood, had in 1960 a Mexican-American enrollment of approximately 75 percent. Alamo High School, which neither lies in nor borders on a Mexican-American neighborhood, has the largest vocational training program in the city and included in its 1960 enrollment the next largest proportionate number of Mexican-Americans, over 40 percent.

All of the nineteen high schools in Houston have some students of Mexican ancestry, but over 90 percent of Mexican-American students are concentrated in only four schools, Seguin, Travis, and the two named above. These four schools are the only ones with Latin-American clubs. Most of the high school students discussed in this chapter are members of and hold office in these organizations. Latin-American clubs are discussed at length because they provide an important opportunity for social interaction among Mexican-American students. Their importance is indicated by their continuity despite the disapproval of some high school administrators, who believe the students are segregating themselves, and by the enthusiastic support the clubs receive from the students and the Mexican-American community at large.

The first Latin-American club was formed about fifteen years ago at Grant High School. The idea then spread rapidly. Students from schools lacking such organizations participate in the Latin-American clubs of other high schools.

In the past, and still to some extent, many people of Mexican ancestry preferred to be known as "Latin American" rather than "Mexican." It is reasonable to assume that this preference lies behind the use of the name "Latin-American Club." The term remains acceptable today despite attempts to change it to "Mexican-American."

The official objective of these clubs is to raise money to sponsor activities for graduating seniors of Mexican ancestry. The clubs first sponsored Latin-American proms, which still remain the primary events, but many more activities have been added. Proms are open to anyone who purchases an "invitation"; however, other events, such as picnics, banquets, and bus trips, are for seniors only. The activities of the Latin-American clubs generally parallel those of the senior class as a whole.

Some principals of the schools with Latin-American clubs do not officially recognize the organizations. The administrators' main objection is that the Mexican-American members are segregating themselves. As one principal stated:

> There is no need for the Latin-American students to form their own club. If I allow that, then we'll have all the Latin-Americans in one little group, all the Negroes in one little group and all the Anglos in another group. This causes internal friction in the student body. I feel like these clubs defeat the purpose of education. These kids totally segregate themselves from the rest of the school. If you have a graduation exercise they don't want to be in it. They say, 'That's for the Anglos or Negroes.'

Other administrators, counselors, and teachers, however, support the clubs' activities and have expressed delight over the elaborate dances.

Club members deny that they are practicing segregation. Some are aware that a self-imposed segregation, little related to formally established clubs, nevertheless exists. As one student explained:

> The Anglos stay with the Anglos, the Latin-Americans stay with the Latin-Americans and the Negroes with the Negroes. This doesn't mean that we don't talk to each other and have friends from each group. That's just the way it is.

Despite the objections of many school administrators, the clubs continue. At the beginning of the year a Mexican-American senior calls a meeting to elect officers, plan fund-raising activities, and discuss the functions to be sponsored in the upcoming year. To assure a club's continuance after the seniors have graduated, a representative member from the junior class is elected each year. Whether the school's name should be included in the name of the club is a topic usually debated at length. Some principals have forbidden this, but informal and formal reference is nonetheless always made to the school, as in the prom invitations, for example, "The members of the Latin-American Club and the Senior Class 1967 of _____ High School request your presence at their Graduation Dance."

Although many teachers and other school personnel support the Latin-American clubs by purchasing tickets to their affairs, few attend them. Participants in club activities mainly consist of Mexican-American students, their relatives, and Mexican-American friends.

These clubs are well known throughout the Mexican-American community. By the time a Mexican-American student enters high school, he not only has heard about the local club but also has probably attended a prom with his family. The different clubs compete in mounting the biggest and most extravagant prom. From the beginning of the school year they sponsor cake sales, car washes, raffles, tamale sales, and dances, and may raise over $2,000. Preparations for the prom begin months in advance. Ballrooms in the best hotels are rented, and several bands are commissioned to assure continuous music.

Traditions are cherished. For example, one club considers it a tradition to have prom invitations printed by the same business firm each year. Procedures at the prom follow definite patterns. Seniors wear formal attire; the boys dress in identical jackets and the girls in the same color and style of gowns. If more than one high school participates, the students wear banners imprinted with the name of their school. A master of ceremonies, usually a well-known Mexican-American radio or television personality, announces the names of the graduating seniors and their respective high schools. As each name is called, the students and their escorts march into the ballroom and are applauded. The applause is louder from the sections of the ballroom where relatives and friends of students are seated. To a background of soft music, the seniors slowly march the full length of the ballroom and form a line on either side of the dance floor. The master of ceremonies then introduces the president of the club, who welcomes the audience and introduces the other officers and sponsors of the organization. The president next crowns a prom queen, the girl who has

raised the most money during the school year. Gifts are then awarded to other active members. The first dance, usually a Mexican waltz, is for seniors alone, after which the entire audience may join in. Dancing continues throughout the evening, but for the seniors, speeches and congratulations continue at a long table covered with graduation gifts and a huge cake.

There are many views regarding the prom's significance. Some students speak of the opportunity for their "own" music to be played—Mexican waltzes, *cumbias,* polkas, and so on; "soul music" is also popular. Others say the prom is the last activity in which they will participate as seniors. Some students mention the pride it gives their parents or the opportunity which the club provides to earn and spend money as responsible adults.

To interpret coherently these various comments, and thus to achieve deeper understanding of the prom's importance, other aspects of the lives of Mexican-American high school youth must be considered.

The Mexican-American students' responsible and enthusiastic participation in Latin-American clubs contrasts markedly with their behavior in other high school organizations. One club leader commented:

> You hardly ever see Latin-Americans running for anything at school. I guess they don't think they'll get elected, so they don't bother to run. The Latin-Americans don't have anything to do with the school activities. The Anglos run everything and the Latin-Americans are behind them. I don't feel equal to the Anglos but yet I don't feel unequal. They have an advantage over us. They take over everything.

Many students express feelings of inferiority or anger at the barriers to their participation in high school social life. Some say that open discrimination is practiced, not only by Anglo students but also by the faculty and administration. They cite discrimination in sports and in the allocation of scholarships and other awards. Others, however, disagree, saying that discrimination does not exist, or that the teachers show exaggerated favoritism toward Mexican-Americans and Negroes. Still others maintain that, while discrimination does exist, it is declining. One student says:

> In my father's day they were really against Latin-Americans. They couldn't even go into a restaurant. This changed after World War II. After that war many Latin-Americans came back heroes. They wanted to be treated equal at home just as they had been treated equal during the war. The Latin-American is getting more and more now because things have changed. I think the Latin-American is getting into more groups and finding out how he can get ahead. The Latin-American is receiving a lot more respect now. A lot of them are dying for our country. Many of our buddies are in the war right now.

Another optimistically states:

> Things have really changed a lot. I think the various organizations are the cause. I think the Mexicans used to be embarrassed; they couldn't see new ways of getting ahead so they kept to themselves. Now they are starting to go up. Look at our State Representative, and local attorneys—they have gone up. I'm planning to live right here. There are some people here who are fighting for the Mexicans.

One Mexican-born student, however, who spent several years at school in Monterrey and at the University of Mexico, speaks with bitterness of the preferred treatment accorded Anglos in Mexico.

> The Mexican people think the world of the United States. They think the United States has the best democratic system. The Mexican people practically adore the United States. They treat the Anglos as well as they can. Some do it for money but others because they are good of heart. But the Anglos don't treat the Mexicans as well as the Mexicans treat the Anglos. The Mexicans came to this country and have tried their best to learn the language and the customs of the country, but they still aren't treated right. I think the Anglos are more intelligent because it's their country, but in another country they would find themselves as we are; they would be second class. In the United States everyone has an equal opportunity, but the Latin-American doesn't make use of this opportunity because he feels second class. They always take the dirty jobs.

The Anglicized Mexican. One solution to such feelings of rejection and deprecation is rejection of one's minority group and identification with the dominant group. The Mexican-American who refuses to associate with his Mexican-American peers is called an "Anglo" Mexican; he is scorned by Mexican-Americans and accused of denying his Mexican heritage. Such a person is usually attractive by Anglo standards (i.e., has Anglo-Saxon physical features), and is well accepted and popular with the Anglo students because he is sufficiently Anglicized. His Mexican-American peers, on the other hand, reject him because he is trying to "improve himself" by assuming Anglo characteristics and customs. Of one such individual it was remarked, "He tries to act like he isn't Mexican but we all know."

Barbara Garcia—who does not belong to the Latin-American club in her high school, and whose contact with other Mexican-American students is minimal—is considered an "Anglo" Mexican. She is a cheerleader and an officer in an elite social group to which few Mexican-Americans belong. Her family used to live in a predominantly Mexican-American neighborhood, but they now are the only Mexican-American family residing in an Anglo suburb. Her steady boyfriend is an Anglo. A female member of one of the Latin-American clubs says of Barbara, "Most of us think she thinks she's too good for us." Linda Lozano, Barbara's prime competitor throughout school, comments:

> Her Anglicized ways used to really make me mad. She constantly made me feel inferior. She always had this superior attitude. I would tell her she was a complete insult to our race because of the way she was and the way she would act. In high school she completely went over to the Anglo side. She didn't in the least congregate with Mexicans.

Barbara is acutely aware of her position as an Anglicized Mexican.

> It's not that I don't want to be friends with Latin-Americans. It's just that I've always had friends who were Anglos, and the Latin-Americans didn't want to have anything to do with me. I think that to get anywhere in this world you have to be friends with both kinds. That's what I've tried to do but the Latin-Americans won't have anything to do with me. If they would have told me when the Latin-American club held its meetings I would have joined, but they didn't tell me so I didn't join.

Barbara's mother decided to raise her children to speak English first and only later did she gradually teach them Spanish. As a result, Barbara speaks Spanish but not fluently. Her parents never celebrated the traditional Mexican holidays and she is therefore unaware of their significance. Also, Barbara's parents were less strict with her than parents who follow Mexican customs of rearing a daughter. For example, Barbara was allowed to date when she was fourteen, whereas Linda was not given this privilege until her senior year in high school. Linda's father takes the traditional Mexican attitude toward dating, which Linda considers "extremely conservative." In Mexico, a man should not court or call upon a woman unless he is prepared to proclaim his love for her and his willingness to marry her. Even then, any dating must be chaperoned.

The Mexican-American in Two Worlds. Barbara's background and interests are not greatly dissimilar from those of her peers. She speaks Spanish, though not fluently, and grew up in a Mexican-American neighborhood with Mexican-American friends. The major difference between Barbara and her peers is social. She has been accepted by, and moves largely with, Anglos. In contrast, her peers are isolated from Anglo society because of their minimal participation in it, although their tastes, attitudes and beliefs reflect Anglo-American influence. For example, as one student defined her taste in music:

> I like the Starlights better than Los Muchachos because they play pop music. I like to dance Mexican polkas and waltzes but I also like to do the "Boogaloo" and the "Slide."

Another girl's preferences in television programs and music reflect both Mexican and Anglo-American influence:

> My favorite television programs are "Mission Impossible," "As the World Turns," "Peyton Place" and "Hogan's Heroes." I like fast music and like to dance the "Skate." I don't particularly like the Monkeys, the Beatles or Bob Dylan. The kind of music I like is sorta like Negro music. I always listen to KNUZ [an English-speaking radio station]. I've also been dancing at the Hispanic Club [a Mexican-American night club]. On Saturday nights they have big bands like the Bishops, and Little Joe and the Latineers [bands which play both Mexican and Anglo-American music].

Some Mexican-American students cannot speak Spanish at all and the majority of those who can are not able to read or write the language. Few go to Mexican movies. Most consider themselves Americans. The Treasurer of the Seguin Latin-American club, and one of its most active members, rarely dates Mexican-Americans; most of her dates are with boys she met in her church, where she and her family are the only Mexican-Americans.

Neither male nor female members of the Latin-American clubs are familiar with the attitudes and beliefs of *machismo,* the Spanish and Latin-American ideal of masculinity. A man with *machismo* asserts his masculinity

whenever possible, through aggressiveness toward other men and through domination of women. The latter are never to question or challenge this traditional role.

However, most students have heard of *curanderas,* who, like shamans in primitive societies, are believed to possess supernatural powers which can be employed to cure illnesses and chase away evil. Those who believe in *curanderismo* use the remedies of the *curanderas.* A girl who is called "Maria" at home and "Mary" at school recalls:

> When I was little my mother would put cobwebs on a cut to stop the bleeding and it worked very well. Another time there was an old drunk my neighbor wanted to cure. They covered him with a blanket and then swept over his body with some branches. Then they rolled a raw egg under his bed. This is supposed to pull the disease out of a person.

However, most students have never experienced any first-hand contact with *curanderas* or *curanderismo.*

> Yes, I've heard of *curanderas* but I don't know any. Most of the people I know go to a doctor when something happens. I don't know of any women who go to midwives.

As a result of having lived, studied, and worked in Houston, Mexican-American youth have been extensively exposed to Anglo-American culture. It may be that the longer a group of people are so exposed, the less "Mexican" they will become. Numerous examples of the disappearance of traditional Mexican culture traits have been presented here. It is questionable, however, whether all differences will be effaced and the Mexican immigrant and his descendants "melted" in the melting pot to be remolded in the Anglo-American image. Cultural traits which arose as functionally valuable in Mexico may no longer be functional: science is replacing magic, medicine is displacing *curanderismo,* and women are insisting on equal status vis-à-vis men. Hence, it may be correct to say that Mexican culture as it existed in Mexico does not exist in Houston; but, as usually happens when two cultures come in contact, new ways of life combining old and new cultural traits are likely to emerge. When one culture is in a dominant position with respect to the other, one possible response of members of the subordinate culture is a clinging to traditional elements—as a badge of identity, a mode of maintaining personal integrity while yet in close proximity to members of the dominant culture.

The significance of the Latin-American club and its prom is apparent when Mexican-Americans are considered as members of a minority group with low status who, although they may share many of the characteristics of the dominant group, are usually denied access to the economic, educational, legal, and other channels open to Anglos. Thus withdrawal, versus identification, is another potential response which the Mexican-American, as a member of a minority group, can make to discrimination. Social

distance is both externally and self-imposed. Boundaries are carefully drawn, for example, by formal emphasis upon cultural distinctiveness. One student enunciates his feelings about the Latin-American prom:

> We like to do something separate. We want to feel we can do something on our own. It feels bad when people don't talk to you. Some Anglos are nice and talk to you but others don't. A great percentage of the students don't treat us like they should. I don't think I blame them at all. They are better off financially. Our parents have the dirty jobs. I feel as if I am in a foreign country. I'm ashamed that the Latin-Americans don't try to make something of themselves.

Shame and a sense of rejection are countered by social activities which provide a sense of solidarity, of mutual respect and support, and often provide an opportunity to demonstrate traits valued by the dominant society. A priest, in discussing the prom as a strengthening and unifying force, pointed out, "You might go back to the typical cartoon of the Mexican, the fat old man lying around, a lazy bum. These kids want to show that this is not so."

The president of one Latin-American club claims that the clubs serve "to unify our race." His views of Anglo society reflect another kind of attempt, through aggressive self-confidence, to assert the worth and raise the status of the Mexican-American:

> I think the Anglo is going down. Their morality is dropping. A mini-skirt wedding performed by a minister in Grand Central Station is evidence of this. The Mexican can stand time and endurance while the Anglo tires of the day too soon. They have tried too many changes. This should be a message to all Latin-Americans to take advantage of the situation and raise themselves, but this advantage is not known to them.

A counselor at one school emphasizes the importance of the Latin-American prom to the entire family, and compares the prom to the first Holy Communion. As one girl explained:

> It's a big night for the Latin-American students. Maybe to the other [Anglo] students the prom doesn't mean so much but to us it means a lot. It's something I really look forward to. It confirms that I'm out of high school.

At the close of twelve years of school, the prom provides the near-equivalent of a "coming out" party; it may be interpreted as an initiation rite specifically designed to meet the needs of Mexican-Americans.

CHAPTER IV

AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Only two to four percent of Mexican-American high school graduates go on to college, according to the estimates of an administrator of the Houston Independent School District; but, he says, this figure is increasing.

High school seniors in the Latin-American clubs were questioned about their future plans. The officers of the clubs represent an especially intelligent, active, and motivated segment of this group. A few have received scholarships and plan to attend college; but most of the interviewees had no such intentions and, in fact, were undecided about future plans. Many who have worked part time during their high school years will continue to work after graduation. A large number of Mexican-American students in both high school and college join ROTC with the intention of enlisting in the service. ROTC is an important organization in and of itself; many of the Mexican-American members express pride in their participation. The principal of one high school, in responding to the suggestion that Mexican-Americans often are not allowed or encouraged to participate in school activities, pointed out that most of the students in the high-school-sponsored ROTC drill team were Mexican-American.

A vice-president of one Latin-American club says his parents want him to attend a junior college in the area, but he is undecided. If he does attend, "I will probably take air conditioning. You know, learn a trade." Another student comments:

> I have two years of Vocational Automotive Training. I attended night classes twice a week for two years studying auto mechanics. I received a Tow Certificate from Ford Motor Company and hope to go to work for them. I think I might eventually go to business college and study bookkeeping. I had a year of bookkeeping in high school and I think I'd like to be a C.P.A.

Yet another high schooler feels that his courses in typing and bookkeeping will help him obtain a job as a clerk in a post office.

The sergeant-at-arms of the Seguin Latin-American Club would like to join the police department, but, as he is underweight, he has also considered becoming an Air Force or National Guard member, or possibly a postal clerk. One student, who plans to attend college and eventually to study law, believes that the majority of the club members possess college aptitudes "but they need someone to push them."

Few Mexican-American girls consider university study. An extremely active member of one Latin-American club, who is in the top ten percent of her graduating class and whose brothers have attended college, does not think it necessary for girls to continue higher education. She worked part time as an office aid while attending high school and took many business courses.

The treasurer of the Seguin Latin-American Club, a member of the Honor Society and a nominee for the American Legion Award, worked part time at a beauty shop, received her beautician's license, and now plans to work as a beautician. Her sister studies accounting at the University of Houston.

The vice-president of the Latin-American Club at Grant, also a member of the Honor Society, wants to be a stenographer. Previously she had considered teaching, but a relative warned her of the hard work and low pay. She also considered working for the F.B.I., but she did not wish to make the required move to Washington, D.C. She reports that most of her girl friends find jobs with insurance companies after graduation.

The small percentage of Mexican-American high school students who do attend college choose either the University of Houston or one of the junior colleges in the Houston area. The number of Mexican-American students from Houston who actually receive college degrees is unknown.

LOMAS (League of Mexican-American Students), a college organization comparable to the Latin-American clubs, was created in the summer of 1967 and began recruiting students from the University of Houston that fall. Many of its members are not native Houstonians but come from nearby cities and towns in South Texas. Before LOMAS was created, several short-lived attempts had been made to organize Mexican-Americans at the University of Houston. Some students attribute these earlier failures to apathy or to disagreement among student leaders over the organization's goals.

From its inception, LOMAS was split into two factions. The majority of the members wanted only a social organization. Many of these students came from middle-class families in predominantly Mexican-American areas in South Texas and had rarely encountered discrimination. Their families support their education and these students voice middle-class aspirations. One boy described himself as "essentially Anglo in all ways except socially."

A minority of members, mostly Houstonians, were more concerned with sponsoring programs to aid the larger Mexican-American community. Toward the end of 1968, members of LOMAS visited high schools to inform Mexican-American students about procedures in applying for college and financial aid. The LOMAS members also taught citizenship classes for adults, tutored children, participated in voter registration drives, and sponsored a dance to raise money for scholarships for Mexican-American college students.

As is true for most organizations, the future of LOMAS depends on such factors as its leaders' ability to unify and motivate members. The factionalism within LOMAS is evident in the larger Mexican-American community as well. The fact of LOMAS' continued existence must be considered within the larger context of recent national events that may be classified as variations on the theme of outspoken dissent of self-conscious groups. Negroes, Mexican-Americans, "under thirties," females, or conscientious objectors to war and violence have grievances around which to crystallize group identity and a formula of dissent.

In the spring of 1968 and 1969, LOMAS members attended a state-wide conference of Mexican-American college students held at the University of Texas in Austin. Both conferences attempted to unify Mexican-American college students by giving a common name to various existing organizations. However, attempts to formulate goals and policies acceptable to the majority of Mexican-American college students have thus far failed, primarily because of the diversity of experience, grievances, and goals which characterize the conferences' constituents.

Mexican-Americans are especially aware of the Negro's campaign for civil and social rights and have frequently linked their own problems with the question of race. Phrases such as "brown power" and "*raza unida*" (united race) reflect this tendency. Mexican-American youth often listen to Negro radio stations and enjoy soul music at their dances. One Negro radio station occasionally plays Mexican-American tunes.

Interviewees' comments often revealed envy of the Negro's relative success in gaining the attention and financial support of white society. Some of this envy and frustration stems from the difficulty of delineating the exact nature of the Mexican-American's grievances. The fact that Mexican-Americans are less sociologically visible than Negroes, and more diverse in talents, appearance, and experience, may partially explain their title as "the forgotten people."

In the following pages, the life histories of two Mexican-American college students are presented. What motivates the few Mexican-Americans who do attend college? Analyzing the responses of the Houstonian interviewees, one may draw several generalizations. These students are usually from low-income families; in many cases they are the first in their families to attend college. They live at home and work their way through college, and have usually been encouraged to continue their education by teachers or close friends.

These statements also apply to the two students discussed below, but differences in their individual life styles deserve further treatment. Joe Longoria appears primarily motivated by a desire to conform to his peer group. His horizons are relatively narrow; to him, college mainly offers security. Ruben Vega, on the other hand, is representative of some of the

more outspoken college youth. His horizons are broad; he considers himself more "internationalistic" than nationalistic, and is articulate and capable of intense involvement.

These two students share many characteristics with Anglo college youth. Motivation to achieve and to gain affluence are common to both groups. However, discrimination was a prominent theme in the responses of the Mexican-American students interviewed. Encounters with discrimination, as exemplified in the following life histories, have influenced these students' behavior, self-perceptions, and conceptions of their futures.

Joe Longoria

Joe Longoria lives with his parents in Telephone Park, so called by Mexican-Americans because the area borders a huge company which soaks telephone poles in oil. At one time Telephone Park's residency was mixed Anglo and Mexican-American, but it is now almost exclusively Negro and Mexican-American.

Joe is a twenty-year-old sophomore at the University of Houston. He was born in Jefferson Davis Hospital, one of Houston's charity hospitals. He is of medium build; his close-cut hair is pitch black and extremely wavy. He has small brown eyes, a thick nose and a dark, ruddy-brown complexion. He has very dominant Indian features.

Joe appears very shy; he speaks with an apologetic facial expression and avoids looking directly at his interlocutor. His accent is noticeable, especially in words with the initial letters "sh" and "ch" ("shoes" sounds like "choose" and "chair" like "share"). Although both of Joe's parents speak English, his father prefers to speak Spanish.

Joe's father was born in Mexico and migrated to Texas at an early age. Several years ago he owned a cantina on the outskirts of downtown Houston, but he went bankrupt and is now a waiter. Joe's mother was born in Texas. She works part time as a bag inspector at the Space City Bag Company.

Joe is the fourth of seven children. His eldest sister dropped out of the eleventh grade to go to work when their father's business failed. She moved to California "to find a better life," and now lives there with her husband and three children. Rosemary, Joe's second oldest sister, is also married and has five children. She lives in Houston and works part time at a drugstore. Rosemary left school in the eighth grade to go to work.

Joe's oldest brother, Adam, is single and works in California as a stable hand at a race track. Adam dropped out of the ninth grade. Joe's younger brother, Edward, graduated from high school and immediately joined the Air Force. He recently came home on leave and married his fifteen-year-old girlfriend, much against Joe's advice. Edward intends to become an auto mechanic. Because he was outstanding in auto mechanics in high school, at graduation he received a set of mechanic's tools from the Auto Mechanic

department. The third brother, Jesse, is in the eleventh grade at Grant High School.

Because Joe was failing the first grade, his mother transferred him to a second grade school. Joe recalls walking with neighborhood friends "about two miles" to the elementary school. He remarks that "there were a lot more Whites than Mexicans," but no Negroes in the school. He vividly recalls the relationship between the Mexican-American and Anglo students:

> The Mexicans always used to stick together in little groups. We always tried to out-do the White guys; we'd try to put them down. In sports we always had the all-Mexican team and would let one or two White guys play on our team just to make them feel good. The teacher would always try to get us to play together but it never worked.

Joe noted other differences between the Mexican-American and Anglo students:

> Some of the kids used to take tortillas, frijoles, chile and all that stuff to school in their lunch. I never did, I just took plain white bread and meat. I remember some of the White kids used to make fun of them but some of them [Anglos] would want to switch sandwiches with them. They'd see those tortillas and say, 'Man, I want some' (laughter). The thing I remember about the white kids is that they would bring these lunch pails, you know. They had everything, thermos bottles, apples, cakes and desserts. Man they were real nice. Heck, I took my lunch in a plain brown paper sack (laughter), with a sandwich and maybe some fritos, but no apples or bananas.

Joe recalls his grade school days as "the times I used to play around with other guys." He described himself as an average student who tried to get along with everyone. However, he made a few enemies.

> You know, these 'pachuco' type guys, the real tough guys. I tried to join their crowd and come up to their level but I never could. They rejected anyone who didn't agree with their views; like they would steal something from the store or they would take hub caps off of cars and that kind of stuff. Well, I didn't hang around with them. I remember one guy, his name was Matthew, everybody called him "Mateo." He's in jail right now. He's always been in and out of jail. He used to go to these reform schools. I don't know, I used to try to join their crowd but I just couldn't.

Joe attended Madison Junior High School, near his home. Madison is located in the North side of Houston in a predominantly Mexican-American area, about half a block from Grant High School. Approximately ninety percent of Madison's enrollment is Mexican-American. The school is reputedly one of the roughest in Houston, and its drop-out rate is the highest among junior high schools in the city. Joe recalls many student fights among the Mexican-Americans and between Mexican-Americans and Anglos.

> The Anglos were in a minority there. We used to pick on them during gym class. You know, we didn't care for them too much. We used to pick fights with them. We accepted them if they could take it; there were some pretty tough white guys there. If they couldn't take it, we said the heck with them. We frowned upon them and didn't mess with them. You know, we wouldn't let them play with us in sports. We had to pick our basketball and football teams and we just didn't let them play. We used to pick just the best players

or only Mexicans. I remember I had quite a few fights, no more than usual (laughter)—about three a week. They [the fights] were mostly in gym; you saw somebody you didn't like and if he didn't like you, you had it out. If you won you made fun of the other guy. I don't know (laughter), we used to have a lot of fun. Things usually started when you were having fun. We used to play rough in gym. I remember basketball. It was rough. It did us good, though, we worked up a good sweat. Most of the fights were fist fights. Maybe once or twice you would see a knife fight but very rarely. I remember a few fights between girls, too.

In junior high school Joe became close friends with Irvin Ling, a Chinese-American who tremendously influenced Joe and his behavior. "Irvin's the smartest guy I know; he made me realize a lot of things." They have remained good friends. Joe explains how their friendship developed:

I guess Irvin started influencing me in the eighth grade. I knew him before but only vaguely. Another friend of mine, Manuel, knew him pretty well; I got to know Irvin through him. We were in the Science Club and we were all lab assistants. We used to have a good time. Irvin, boy I tell you, that Shinese [Chinese] guy was always the smartest. He made straight A's all the time. I don't know, I guess I was kinda jealous. I envied him because he was so smart and made straight A's. So I tried to make straight A's too, but I never did. Sometimes I would make all A's and one B, but I never made straight A's. But Irvin would always encourage me. He'd say "Man, you can do better than that, you've got to try harder so you can go to college, get a good job and raise a good family." Or he would say "why don't you study harder!" He was very mature for his age and real serious. You know, he's my best friend. That Irvin, he's a good guy. He always used to tell me not to be like Manuel (laughter). Manuel was kinda wild. You know, he was curious about things and always getting into trouble and getting paddled. Irvin used to tell me "Uh-Uh, man, don't do like Manuel, just leave him alone, don't mess with him" (laughter)! But I still hung around with him [Manuel]. We played basketball together.

After he began "hanging around" with Irvin, Joe was involved in fewer fights and paid more attention to his school work. His grades improved so markedly that he was invited to join the Honor Society. He joined all the clubs Irvin did.

We belonged to just about everything: Honor Society, Science Club, Citizenship Club, Patriotism Club, everything. I remember Irvin belonged to the French Club. A "Shinese" Frenchman (laughter). I used to make fun of him. Irvin was always the president; he was the president of everything. If you stuck close to Irvin, you were with good people. Everybody wanted to know Irvin. I don't know, if it hadn't of been for Irvin I wouldn't have joined anything.

As a result of Joe's increased interest in schoolwork, he developed several close relationships with his teachers. He never felt that they discriminated against him, but rather that they made especial efforts to help him. He feels he learned more in junior high than in high school.

Maybe it's because I was going through a stage of discovery, you know, trying to learn something. And they were there showing me the way, helping me out. I remember one teacher, my science teacher, he's a pharmacist, he was real good to me. He's the one who got me interested in pharmacy and directed me. One time he took the Shinese

guy, Manuel and myself to his house. He told us, "Boys this is what you can get if you're a pharmacist." It was a real nice house. He'd always get some of his best students and take them to his house or have a picnic. He's an Anglo. I go by and see him once in a while. He's the only teacher I ever go back and see.

Joe always looked forward to graduating from junior to senior high school. He remembers his awe and curiosity as he passed Grant High School on his way to Madison. He was tempted to go inside to investigate but was "afraid someone would jump me." In high school, his initial impression was one of hugeness. He was disappointed with his teachers, whom he found "old-fashioned" and less interested in the students than the Madison instructors.

Especially the English teachers; they were bad. I remember one old English teacher; she always used to make the girls sit on one side and the boys on the other side. I don't know if she liked Mexicans or not but I know she never gave us any A's; only to the White students, never to the Mexicans. But I really didn't care for any of those teachers too much. It didn't bother me at all if they were prejudiced or not.

Joe belonged to several organizations in high school—including the Science Club, the History Club, the Latin Club and the ROTC drill team—but did not continue his membership in the Honor Society. He resented what he termed the need to "brown nose" certain teachers and administrators in order to gain special privileges such as scholarships and positions of leadership in various organizations: "Most of the Anglos got the scholarships anyway and there wasn't anything anyone could do but gripe."

The relationship between Anglos and Mexican-Americans "was about the same as it was at Madison, except there were fewer fights." He says the Anglos weren't "picked on" as much as they were at Madison. If an Anglo demonstrated athletic ability in gym class, he was respected. Joe himself was "paddled" quite a few times in gym class for fighting and for calling the gym teacher names.

Joe maintained his close friendship with Irvin Ling in high school and admits that Irvin helped him pass several difficult subjects. "Irvin used to help me with my homework, especially in chemistry and physics. Man, he was always prepared." Joe takes a great deal of pride in his influence on Irvin to join the ROTC.

Irvin always liked to be with me. He didn't like gym too much. He was always telling me what to do, so I told him "Join ROTC." I really influenced him there.

ROTC became an important part of Joe's high school life. He decided to join when he first saw the ROTC drill team practice.

One day I saw the guys out on the football field in their uniforms, and I remembered seeing my uncle in his uniform. I watched the drill team spinning their rifles and they were dressed real "charp" [sharp]. That's what impressed me the most, their uniforms. I decided right away to join. I got on the drill team as soon as I could.

The majority of the cadets were Mexican-Americans, who shared a strong feeling of comradeship.

> Man, in the corps we thought the Mexicans were the best. We were all from the North side and we all thought "*La Raza*" was the best; I was pro-Mexican all the way. I used to say "Mexicans are the best soldiers, if you're not Mexican, you don't know anything." We used to tell the White guys that Mexicans were better than White guys in everything, in football, in basketball, all the players were Mexicans. A few of the White guys would try to learn Spanish and all that stuff but you know, everything was Mexican over there.

In his senior year, Joe held the highest position a cadet may attain; he is extremely proud of this accomplishment. He participated enthusiastically in the parties, picnics, and other corps activities and won many awards.

Joe planned to enter the service after graduation but Irvin encouraged him to go to college. Joe feels that most Mexican-Americans don't attend college because no one "pushes" them. He finds college very different from his previous school experiences. His studies are extremely demanding, especially the science courses required for a degree in pharmacy. Nevertheless, Joe has not considered any other field and intends to continue in pharmacy for at least another year.

Joe is not as active in extracurricular university activities as he was in junior high school events. He joined, and was recently elected treasurer, of the League of Mexican-American Students. Joe also entered the University of Houston ROTC, but he has become dissatisfied with it. He feels that most of the officers do not know even the fundamentals of "soldiering" and Joe becomes frustrated when obvious mistakes are made by those in command.

> I know I'm right because, hell, I was an officer in high school; but I can't tell them anything. If I try to tell them or "teash" [teach] them they get mad and tell me I'm trying to go above my authority in rank. I've already got into a bad fight over here with an officer on account of this. I told him off, man, I cussed him, I cussed the hell out of him. This happened my first two weeks in the corps. He was trying to show us how to present arms. I'm telling you, that corps is the sloppiest corps I've ever seen. I showed him in the manual where he was wrong. He got mad at me because I made him look real bad in front of everybody. That was wrong on my part; maybe I should've taken him off to the side and showed him where he was wrong, I don't know (hesitation). He told me he wanted to talk to me alone about it. He said we were going to review everything but when he got me alone, he told me off. He told me not to ever interrupt one of his lectures. He tried to tell me off very intellectually. I just told him again he was wrong. He told me he was going to report me to the Commander and I told him to go ahead, I wasn't that crazy about the corps anyway. I went and told the Commander myself. I told him I was an ex-commander myself and that I knew what I was talking about when I corrected that guy. He told me I was right too, but that I would have to bear with guys like that. I was mad for about two days. I've been looking for that guy, and when I see him I'm gonna knock the hell out of him. It hasn't been so long that I've forgotten how to fight. I feel like relieving some tensions anyway. I tell you, that's one thing you learn at Madison, if anyone gets in your way just knock them out.

I might have been wrong in telling the guy off and everything, but I don't say anything unless I'm right. I don't speak out and tell everybody off every day. Anyway most of the people around here are smarter than I am. I don't know. I don't know if I should continue in ROTC. I just don't know.

Since eleventh grade Joe has worked part time, usually as a waiter "because you can make good money," as his father maintained. During high school Joe worked every evening and on weekends. He now works only on weekends and has had to seek his father's financial aid.

Sometimes my father gets mad at me for asking for money. He knows I can get out and work and make good money. But I can't work everyday and go to school too; and not working everyday makes my father mad. He's all for me going to school but he wants me to work too. He wants me to bring in money. I don't think I want to quit going to school. But you never can tell, things may be hard next year.

Joe gives his mother money whenever he can, "but I never give my father any." Before entering college, he bought a car with his hard-earned savings. He now spends most of his money on tuition, books, and "just running around."

Joe has had several girlfriends but has "never been serious over anyone." In elementary school he had a white girlfriend. "We used to eat together, but not too much because the other guys would frown upon you for having some kind of relationship with a girl, especially at that age. You know, all the guys liked to stick together."

In junior high and high school Joe also had girlfriends, but Irvin Ling told him not to "mess around with girls."

Irvin, he's anti-social or anti-girl or something. He said "You got to go to college, you can meet girls at college." There was this girl I liked at Madison, a real smart girl, smarter than I was. But she had to get married, she got messed up, pregnant. I never got her, though. I never took her out. She always made real good grades and she never had to study. I guess I admired her for her intelligence. She was pretty too. There were some other girls too, the real popular girls that everybody likes, you know, the cheerleaders. But, I wasn't really that crazy about them. Sometimes, I really wanted to have them (shy laughter) but they always stuck together in their little groups. There were some wild girls at Madison too, but I never got any of them. I guess Irvin influenced me to stay away from that stuff. Irvin and I had a good relationship. I guess he sorta substituted for the girl. I don't know, I had to talk to somebody. Then in the ninth grade I started messing around. There was this one wild girl, a white girl that everybody used to get. Yeah (hesitation), but I never tried to get her. I really didn't care for girls at that age; well I did, you know, but Irvin told me not to.

Joe says he could never convince Irvin to start dating:

Irvin started getting affected in high school, especially with the prom coming on. But he didn't go to the prom. Man, I offered to pay for everything; I told him I'd pay everything; give the girl money so she could buy a dress, take them out to eat and everything, pay for everything. But he said, "No, money's not the problem" and I know it wasn't because his father owns a store and has good business, makes good money. He just wouldn't go.

During his senior year in high school Joe dated an Anglo girl for a time. He found himself feeling awkward and self-conscious:

> I took this girl to drill team competition. She was the sponsor, you know, one of those White girls, a nice White girl. I felt kinda stupid. I just can't see myself taking out a White girl. I was a little self-conscious at first but we started talking and we got along okay. I didn't want to take her but she kinda asked me to take her, she said she needed a ride. You know, the sponsor has to go to drill team competition. I was supposed to be the big leader out there. I was responsible for all our people out there so I took her. All the guys sure were staring at me.

Joe dated several girls during his senior year. He worries a bit about "running around," afraid it will dominate too much of his time and interfere with his studies. He constantly remarks that he should "stop messing around and start getting serious." He enjoys the parties given by his fellow waiters, especially when some of the waitresses attend:

> They're about 35 or 40 years old. They take me to their apartment and we go at it. They're all Anglos except this Shinese girl. Man, that's good stuff. Get you a Shinese woman, that's the best you can get (laughter). Hell, no, Irvin doesn't know.

One of Joe's reasons for seeking a college education is to help Mexican-Americans. He sees obvious class differences between the Anglo and Mexican-American populations.

> I don't like to see Mexican people in those low-paying jobs. My father used to be a laborer and I used to see him come home with his khaki pants all dirty and with callouses on his hands. Times were pretty hard then. He wouldn't be having too much business at his place and he would go out and take yard work. I don't like to see our people sweeping floors and cutting grass and all that stuff. The Anglos have an advantage over us because they can get the jobs. When Anglos hire other people, they show prejudice. I don't care if they say they are equal opportunity employers or anything, they still show prejudice. You can feel it sometimes. I've never experienced too much discrimination myself but when you walk into a White place you can feel the people staring at you. They look at you, turn their heads or just walk away. I can't stand to see that. Overall, I guess Anglos are good people but like I tell you, they have the advantage. The environment that a Mexican is brought up in is inferior to that of the Anglo. They have better schools, better equipment, everything. Like in high school we didn't have anything; no materials and books like the other schools. I tell you, the Mexicans should start doing something. Look at the colored guys, they're doing something. We're just sitting on our ass, doing nothing. I think we should start speaking out, but not violently like some of these colored guys. But like I tell you, basically the Mexican people aren't doing anything. I don't know, maybe by getting an education I might be able to do something.

Joe's prospects for completing college are dim. He has received little encouragement from his parents. His motives to earn his degree, however, stem less from internalized, long-range goals than from the pressures of those around him, such as teachers and friends. He finds his courses difficult and receives little incentive from his co-workers. Probably the most important fact favoring his completing college is that his friends at the university assume that they will graduate, and Joe will try to meet their expectations.

How he intends to "help his fellow Mexicans" by finishing college is not clear. It is likely that his major future concern will be to achieve a middle-class standard of living.

Ruben Vega

Ruben Vega, a senior at the University of Houston majoring in Latin-American Studies, hopes eventually to obtain a law degree. Degrees from college and graduate school promise him freedom from economic worries and a life of leisure. As a lawyer, he hopes to assist Mexican-Americans, who recognize him as an intelligent, if somewhat radical, spokesman.

Ruben is a serious, intense twenty-two year old. His conversation is punctuated by frequent gesture and verbal emphases. Profanity and slang are sprinkled liberally throughout his speech, more from habit than disrespect. He resembles a young Mexican revolutionary; he sports a mustache and moderately long thick black hair. His face, scarred by acne, has a rough, rugged, outdoor look. He walks like a *pachuco,* bouncing slightly on the balls of his feet.

Ruben was born in Mexico. Although his own family was fairly well-off, he recalls scenes of poverty in the neighborhood where he spent the first six years of his life. Neighbors fed their large families on tortillas, chile, and pork fat. Children died and were buried in makeshift coffins; many had to remain inside their houses because they had no clothes to wear.

The Vega family was relatively wealthy, with land, corn, a few cows and an ox. Ruben's father was a hard worker, much respected by his neighbors and his family. Highly intelligent, he was widely-read and apparently much more knowledgeable than his few years of formal education would warrant. Ruben considers his father an authority on Mexico's revolutions. In *Siempre,* a magazine to which his father subscribes, Ruben was introduced to numerous writers' views on socialism. His father encouraged him to read from a very young age.

When Ruben was six, his father—accompanied only by his oldest son, Eloy—migrated to the United States because he was "failing in the fields." The elder Vega revisited his family frequently, bringing them money and canned food. When Ruben was seven, the entire family moved to Houston. Only Charles, the second oldest son, refused to come.

Like many immigrants, Ruben's father intended to remain in the United States only briefly. The older Vega was so certain the family would return to Mexico that during their first seven years in the U.S. he refused to buy a house. His eleventh child was born in Houston; she is the only Vega who is a United States citizen. Ruben is certain that, once all his siblings finish school, his father will want to return to Mexico. At one time Ruben had planned to accompany his family, but he now considers Texas his home and will "probably become a citizen."

Ruben says that his father was highly respected in Mexico and that "his reputation came across [the border] with him." He is respected "as an elder" in the neighborhood, and is a member of the Masonic Lodge. He works as a roofer.

> There are a whole lot of *pachucos* who work as roofers—but they all respect him. One time two *pachucos* were going to have it out. One of them had a shotgun and was going to kill this other guy, but instead he comes by and talks to my old man. I remember them sitting outside and talking. My old man advised him not to and pointed out all the consequences. He took my father's advice.
>
> He won't allow beer around the house. He knows that I drink and everything, but if I came home drunk, you know, in front of my sister and everything, he wouldn't put up with it. I would get a pretty bad scolding, because I would be violating the respect and everything. But if we were at certain festivals and I was drinking and started feeling good, it would be all right with my old man.

When the Vega family moved to Houston, they lived in an "entirely Mexican" neighborhood. The neighbors exerted a great deal of pressure on Ruben's parents to enroll the children in a Catholic rather than a public school. Although the expense was prohibitive, the social pressure was such that Ruben's mother sought the nuns' help. She was told, however, that the school had "no time to teach English." Ruben traces his dissatisfaction with Catholicism to that incident.

> I remember it clear as *hell*, that they weren't going to take us because we didn't know the language and they didn't have the time. But my old lady was still under pressure from the neighbors. But I wouldn't go, I remembered all that shit. I haven't even made my first holy communion or anything, and it's all because I remember all that stuff.

Pressure also came from the neighbors on another topic. Ruben's parents had been married during a period of anti-clericism in Mexico, when many scandals in the church were exposed and many priests were executed.

> My old man and my old lady got married by a civil judge because at that time it was unpopular to marry through the church. If you did, they were suspicious of you, you know, you were suspect. Well, one of the married old ladies in the neighborhood finds out about this and starts telling my old lady, "You're not married, you're not married according to God," and all of this stuff. The pressure got so bad that my old man married my mother again through the church—and my old man, like I tell you, is a Mason and everything.

Ruben and his sister Elena found public school very frustrating for, although no Anglos attended, students were not allowed to speak Spanish. "Students used to get whipped for speaking Spanish, and I remember they used to pull my ears." With the help of a classmate Ruben began to "catch on" to the language, but Elena had to repeat the first grade because she had not understood the assignments. Ruben's third-grade teacher took an interest in the two children. "She was the only one who really tried to help us. She used to take my sister on trips around the city and everything. She really tried to help us."

By the time Ruben entered junior high school he was speaking English "as well as anybody." Although he had a few Anglo friends, Ruben generally steered clear of Anglos "because they were in the minority." Most of his friends were *pachucos.* Fights often broke out between the Mexican-American and Anglo groups.

> . . . everything used to happen at lunch. If you were walking out of the cafeteria and someone didn't look right, you just walked over there and got your thing straight. But everything was reciprocated. After school in the park hostility would arise between the Mexicans and Anglos there. I was a member of the group, but I couldn't participate in a fight where the odds were uneven.

Such hostility was not as intense in high school, but tensions were evident. Ruben recalls his encounters with an Anglo group led by two brothers.

> One of them had this thing about picking on every strange Mexican that went to Travis. I used to hang around by myself at first because I didn't know anyone. One day after lunch one of the Faulk brothers got this broad to walk by me so I would look at her. She had on this tight skirt and tight sweater and sure enough, I looked at her. She was ugly, man, real ugly. I kinda sensed what was going on because I saw Faulk and all those other studs standing around in a little bunch and looking my way. They came over and gave me all this shit like "I don't like you looking at my broad, you so and so." I just played it cool. "That's your broad?" I don't think I was scared or anything, I just didn't have any friends there. The bell rang and that kinda saved the whole situation.
>
> But another time I was running track. Right before track you had to do a whole lot of exercise, and I beat everybody doing chins, you know, I did about twenty real fast. One of those guys doing exercise was an Italian who hung around with the Faulk brothers. He was nothing but a kiss ass—you know, they didn't like Italians around there either. Anyway, he went and told Faulk that I had beat everybody in gym doing chin-ups and that I thought I was big shit, and that I had brought a knife to school just for him. He was making up a whole lot of junk—they just didn't like me showing them up. Anyway, I was running track by myself. I had my T-shirt wrapped around my head, I looked like an Arab, you know. I had some real strong stomach muscles and well, you know, I was showing off myself. Faulk and a bunch of studs were standing around, and every time I would run by them Faulk would say "Hey you greaser," and they would all laugh. So on my third time around I stopped and put up my fists and said "You mother, I'm tired of your shit, come on." Well, the guy was taken all aback. He knew that I had beat everybody in gym doing exercise and there I was, you know, showing off all my muscles and everything. He started to make excuses, telling me he was just trying to see how far he could push me, how much I would take.
>
> Nothing happened, and from that time on he never said another word to me. But even though the Anglos never say anything, you know what they think about Mexicans. These kinds of incidents just bring it all out. Like one time a friend of mine named Jesse Rodriguez was playing around in gym. He was going to pop me with a wet towel and he accidentally popped this *gabacho* [slang for Anglo] in the back. You know, Jesse didn't mean to do it, but his guy starts telling Jesse, "You goddamn greaser, you goddamn spick," you know, it all came out. And Jesse, man, he was a real good guy, he never messed with anybody. That Anglo just thought he could push Jesse around. He found out different because that afternoon they met at a cemetery and Jesse beat the hell out of him.

Ruben established friendships with a few Anglo schoolmates and teachers who evidenced no discrimination. He feels that in general his teachers treated Mexican-American students fairly. However, a few incidents stand out in his mind as exemplifying the subtle discrimination he encountered in junior and senior high school, especially with respect to grades.

> No one in school ever called me a "Meskin" or anything like that but sometimes you can feel the discrimination, whether it's open or not, like in my history class in junior high school. It was a world history class and well, I didn't have to put too much effort into it. I would just go through it, you know, I wasn't having any trouble at all. I was always making 98's and 99's. I never made anything below 90 in there. But when the grades came around I made a B. So I asked the teacher about it and she said, "Well, you have to have some sort of project to get an A in my class." So I just said "All right." You know, I was just a sprout then, and I really wasn't hung up on grades and all that. But I figured that I had all those 99's and everything and yet I made a B, well, you know. So the next time around I made this map, a real big map, showing all the countries and everything. And this other mother, he was an Anglo, he made this guillotine and he made an A and I made a B. I think the only reason she gave me a B was so I wouldn't outdo this Anglo. But I never told her anything, I just used to look at her real mean (laughter).

In high school Ruben felt that many of his teachers judged him on the basis of his appearance and nationality rather than his classroom performance. His usual dress consisted of "drapes" (pants which are narrow at the bottom and wide at the knee) or khaki pants and narrow, pointed shoes. His shirts were never tucked in, and his hair was long.

Ruben recounts one occurrence in "home room" when he planned his schedule of courses for his four-year high school career:

> By this time, I had a lot of Anglo friends, and they were always talking about going to college, so they had to take certain courses, like chemistry and all that stuff. So I put all those courses down on my four-year plan also. Back in the ninth grade I had put down that I wanted to take ROTC, but I decided to erase ROTC and put down gym. My homeroom teacher, an Anglo, didn't like it. He asked me why I dropped ROTC. I told him that I didn't want to take it anymore, and he starts telling me that it will do me a lot of good and everything. And all the while he's looking at my appearance and I knew what the hell he was thinking: that the ROTC would change my appearance and everything. Then he saw that I had written down chemistry and he tried to get me to take it off and put down General Education, you know, where you work a half a day and go to school half a day. But I wouldn't do it and he kept trying to talk me into it. I know he had a bad impression of Mexicans, I know he did, but I didn't change a thing.

Ruben says many of his teachers found it difficult to accept his good grades.

> One time in chemistry class we had a real hard test and I made a 78. It was the highest grade in the class. The word got around that I made the highest grade and everybody was surprised. You know, like a Mexican wasn't supposed to be making good grades. Well this one little bastard spread the word around that I cheated on the test and the teacher questioned me about it. But I'll tell you one thing, cheating is something I've never done. I just don't believe in it.

> Another time I made the highest grade on a physics test. I was the only Mexican in class and the teacher comes up and starts questioning me about my grade. I know what the hell he thought. There I was with my khaki's and long hair and everything. I know what he thought. The same thing happened to me in my history class. The teacher comes up and starts asking me if Ray Perez and I had been comparing answers. You know, it was like a Mexican didn't make good grades. Any Mexican that made good grades was just naturally suspect.

Even though Ruben completed the necessary college preparatory courses in high school, he was undecided about attending college. He never seriously considered university study until his senior year. He took the college entrance exams "just to see how I would do," and was surprised that he scored so well. As a result, he encouraged his sister Elena to take the tests. Ruben remembers that at one time in junior high school he had considered dropping out of school.

> Most of my friends were quitting school for one reason or another, and it was really up in the air whether I would even go on to high school. At that time things could have gone either way for me, but for some reason I stayed in school. Anything could have blown it for me, hanging around with those guys and everything.

In high school Ruben read *Mein Kampf* and was quite impressed with Hitler's emphasis on discipline. "I was running around disciplining myself, you know, thinking I was a Nazi." He became interested in ideas concerning mental control of the body. He read Garot, the Frenchman, who wrote about the power of the will, and Mesmer. He practiced yoga. "I never got real good at it, though, because I didn't have much privacy at the house. You know, it *is* just a matter of discipline and mind over the body because there's no way the body could take all the stuff I was doing."

Ruben's reading includes adventure stories such as *Moby Dick* and *Robinson Crusoe.* One of his favorite authors is Joseph Conrad. "It seems like everything I read from the tenth grade on left a big impression on me. Like when I read Ayn Rand I would walk around with one of her books under my arm thinking I was an objectivist, you know, a real objectivist."

In college Ruben's extracurricular reading primarily concerned the ideology of political movements. Ruben speaks with authority on the history and objectives of socialist movements, and is especially concerned with the plight of Mexican-Americans. He has worked with Mexican-American juvenile delinquents, participated in the nation-wide boycott of grapes, attended conferences for Mexican-American youth, and spoken to Anglo church organizations about the problems which Mexican-Americans face. He is acquainted with the literature on Mexican-Americans and delights in illustrating how it has perpetuated the stereotype of the Mexican-American. "The man on the street says that the Mexican is lazy; the psychologist says he is non-goal oriented. They both are saying the same thing."

Ruben's association with radical leftist organizations and his "revolutionary" appearance have earned him a reputation as a Mexican militant. This in turn has won him both the affection of many *barrio* occupants and the suspicion of many Mexican-American students on campus.

> Just because I go around looking like I do and talking about what keeps the Mexicans down and the way the system has screwed the majority of the Mexicans ever since they've come to this country; I'm thought of as some kind of political radical. People ask me, "Are you a revolutionary?" "Are you a Communist?" But they're all afraid to speak out, to associate with anything the majority of the people might disagree with.

Despite his concern with the Mexican-American's problems Ruben considers himself more an internationalist than a nationalist. He speaks with compassion of starving Biafrans, of war victims in Vietnam, of Appalachian poor, and of struggling Blacks. He adheres to theories of class interest and conflict which apply to universal situations of suffering. "I think all this stuff about the haves and have-nots is a matter of one class exploiting another, regardless of their ethnic identification." He says he was aware of class differences even as a child. When he lived in a border town there was a Chinese store in the neighborhood which sold all manner of goods. "One Halloween we were hanging around this store. All that Halloween stuff was new to me. I remember being in that store and digging all that stuff they had in there. I knew those people belonged to another class and were making money off of us."

Ruben finds it difficult to predict the future for Mexican-Americans, especially since he believes that they are not a homogeneous group but instead consist of several different sectors, each of which is developing separately. He feels that a Mexican-American uprising is unlikely.

> It seems as if most of our people are caught up in this thing about making it, you know, accumulating things. It's almost as if we're being tricked into it. The lower-class *chicano* has high aspirations and is too worried about making it. The *chicano* students from Houston who are going to college here, most of them are from poor neighborhoods, but their families aren't what you would really call poor. They're not making a whole lot of money, but they're making it. Their sons and daughters come to college and they have the same ideas, you know, they just want to make it. The middle-class *chicano* is less likely to develop into a radical than his Anglo peer. Another thing about our people is that we come in all different shades, from real dark to real white. Most of the white ones, if they're born over here or if they come over here and learn the language, they won't have any trouble making it.

> The people who are caught up in the so-called poverty cycle are the ones who need help. And I don't give a damn what anybody says, something radical in our system is going to have to change in order for these people to break out of their situation. But I really don't think you'll see a national uprising from us . . . maybe if there were thirty million *chicanos,* but not with six million.

Now in his senior year at college, Ruben is still undecided about his future. He has not yet applied for graduate school, and says he may work

as a roofer until he decides what to do. He refuses to take an obvious channel, i.e., working for poverty programs, because he considers such programs ineffective. He is intelligent and well-read and possesses qualities of leadership; his desire to attend law school—much like Joe's desire to become a pharmacist—stems from a wish for security and also from a keen insight into the injustice and agony which many peoples of the world, Mexican-Americans included, undergo. Yet with all his high standards, skills, and historic perspectives, his life is still formed in the shape of a question mark.

CHAPTER V

TRADITIONALISTS AND TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

"Traditionalists" are here defined as people of Mexican ancestry who came to Houston in the 1920's and were instrumental in establishing social clubs in which traditional Mexican customs are observed. Although they have modest incomes and often live in poorer sections of the city, they are highly respected by other Mexican-Americans and have tried to build a respectable image of the Mexican-American in the eyes of the Anglo.

Some of their "traditions" are derived from the "Great Tradition" of the Mexican aristocracy; others are continuations of the "Little Tradition" of the rural areas and small towns from which most of the traditionalists interviewed come. Fleeing from the revolution in Mexico and confronted with prejudice and discrimination in the United States, they borrowed liberally from Mexican membership and reference groups to erect social structures designed to provide a sense of dignity and identity. The clubs originated specifically to sustain "Mexicanism" and to preserve friendships between families of high standing.

The establishment of sharply distinct elitist or minority groups within a city is a common phenomenon—more common than the popularly conceived "melting pot" phenomenon. In many "developing" nations, rural migrants from nucleated villages form residential pockets in the cities (for one example in Africa, see Mayer, 1961; Gans, 1962, discusses the "urban villages" of Italians in Boston). A major reason for maintaining territorial and ethnic unity is to provide mutual aid in a setting characterized by hostility or hardship. (For literature on Africans who come to European-dominated cities, see UNESCO, 1955, and Epstein, 1961). Many Mexican-American common-interest associations provide such aid; they are most numerous in the upper lower class. However, another important function of such organizations is to furnish a setting for social interaction in which prestige can be assigned and observed without reference to the dominant Anglo society. The fact that the younger generation criticizes this function indicates that the need for such encysted structures is passing. More channels of interaction are open today; youth identify with a nation-wide segment of the American population, a segment defined as a "minority" which is

oppressed and demanding of its rights. Younger club members are often concerned with being highly vocal about political issues, frequently taking radical stands. The traditionalists are politically conservative or apolitical. A few are politically active, but most tend to focus their efforts on civic matters such as education. Some of the clubs have constitutions which explicitly state that the club shall not engage in political activities.

Although some of the children and grandchildren of traditionalists participate in the activities of the elite social clubs, many show impatience with or lack of enthusiasm for the clubs' customs. Some bring friends whose families are not recognized as members of the old, established, respected order. Many of these young people prefer the "Twist" to Mexican polkas. The high school Latin-American Clubs provide a sense of pride and group identification; they have their own "traditions." However, most members are ignorant of traditional Mexican customs and beliefs, and they have little desire to live in Mexico. "Mexicanism" among the young is often used to define an oppressed ethnic minority, not a nationalistic and sentimental attachment to the homeland.

According to Samora and Lamanna (1967: 85), who studied Mexican-Americans in a midwestern metropolis, nationalism is "a concept that has provided a source of identification for immigrant groups in the United States, but which has weakened with the passing of each generation and has become for many groups merely a genealogical label with unrealistic but nostalgic overtones."

Today, the traditionalists are of late middle age; they are regarded by most members of the Mexican-American community and by one another as a social elite. They voice a sentimental attachment to Mexico and a reluctance to associate with Anglos. They occupy diverse socioeconomic statuses but share the desire to retain many Mexican characteristics, values, and practices, including the Spanish language, Mexican music, dances, and holidays, and the tightly-knit family in which sex and age roles are clearly segregated.

Not all those whose behavior is "traditionally Mexican" or who belong to the elite social clubs (but may not attend) are traditionalists. Many young and middle-aged professionals attend the clubs, which are for them, however, only one of several areas of social involvement. The mark of the Mexican-American middle-class is extensive participation in Anglo, middle-class society.

Many of the poor preserve Mexican dialects, mannerisms, and customs, but they do so because they live in pockets of poverty inhabited largely by persons of similar background; opportunities to learn the ways of the dominant society are limited. They belong to few associations and have made no concerted effort to form an island of Mexican traditionalism in the sea of American life.

Traditionalist Organizations and Activities

There are more than fifty Mexican-American voluntary associations in Houston. Approximately half of these may be classified as traditionalist; they are explicitly nonpolitical and they emphasize the preservation of Mexican ways of life. Most of them were started by or modeled after clubs already organized by traditionalists.

The clubs' activities are given extensive coverage by the local Mexican-American news media. Houston's two major newspapers also frequently report the clubs' social events.

The organizations have a number of explicitly stated goals. La Sociedad Mutualistica Obrera Mexicana, with six branches in Houston, is a fraternal, mutual-aid society which awards scholarships to Mexican-American high school students and supplies emergency funds for accidents, sickness, and death.

Los Sembradores de Amistad, composed mainly of wealthy Mexican-American professionals who believe that lack of education is the most important issue facing Mexican-Americans today, helps students obtain scholarships, either through direct aid or by providing information on other sources of financial assistance.

The Port of Houston Lions Club, a branch of the Lions Club International, has an entirely Spanish-speaking membership. Its primary concern is to aid the Mexican-American poor.

The traditionalist clubs also promote Mexican festivities, the most important of which is Mexican Independence Day on September 16th. Either singly or with other organizations in the Mexican-American community, the clubs sponsor dances, rallies, outdoor gatherings, and parades. The Mexican consulate in Houston, often in conjunction with local organizations, sponsors the Fiestas Patrias Mexicanas, several days of luncheons, speeches, receptions, and other events to celebrate the occasion. On September 15, Mexican-Americans throughout the city who are attending the various ceremonies give "El Grito de Independencia" (The Cry of Independence—"¡Viva Hidalgo! ¡Viva la libertad! ¡Vivan los heroes de la Independencia de Mexico! ¡Viva Mexico!"); on September 16 the Mexican flag is raised at city hall. A Catholic church in the Mexican-American community of El Dorado has for the twelve years prior to 1969 sponsored a three-day celebration of the Fiestas Patrias. Mexican music is played, local Mexican-American politicians give speeches, and on the third day the queen of the El Dorado Fiestas Patrias is crowned. Attendance varies from a thousand to three thousand each day, and the proceeds go to the church's building fund. The El Dorado fiesta is noted for expensive decorations such as a large-scale duplication of the Church of Dolores Hidalgo in Mexico.

Club Verde Mar, composed of young adults, sponsors a Baile Ranchero

on September 16. The men are dressed in charro suits and the women wear sequined peasant-like blouses. Green, white, and red crepe paper decorates the dance hall, and piñatas dangle from the ceiling.

Other celebrations are less expensive or elaborate, such as those held by branches of La Sociedad Mutualistica Obrera Mexicana which are attended largely by persons of lower socioeconomic standing. The men wear short sleeves and slacks; the women sport Mexican-design skirts and blouses and braided and beribboned coiffures.

An annual parade is staged in downtown Houston in which most of the Mexican-American organizations enter floats or cars labeled with the organization's name. Many of the clubs elect elegantly gowned queens to ride atop the floats. Caballeros in charro outfits file by on horseback, and little girls weave among the paraders demonstrating Mexican regional dances. Many of the city's businessmen contribute to the affair which is sponsored by the publisher of a local Mexican-American newspaper, and both Mexican-American and non-Mexican-American dignitaries participate in the parade. The Latin-American Chamber of Commerce, composed mainly of Mexican-American businessmen, takes an active role in the Independence Day celebrations.

The Instituto de Cultura Hispanica is dedicated to the preservation of Spanish culture and language. Other clubs, such as Mexico Bello, Familias Unidas, and Verde Mar, sponsor traditional Mexican activities and also provide scholarships and other kinds of aid to the Mexican-American community.

Club Mexico Bello (Beautiful Mexico) is the oldest and most elite Mexican-American social club in Houston. It was founded in 1924 "when our Mexican colony was small and no organization existed which could fulfill the aspirations of a group of young people" (quoted in the club's dance program for 1968 which contained a history of Mexico Bello written by one of the organization's founders). The founders wanted to build "a small Mexico in a foreign land to change impressions [about Mexicans], to have a mutual contact in order to preserve intact the idiosyncrasies of their race." The motto of the club is "El Orgullo de Serlo: Patria, Raza, Idioma" (The Pride to be Mexican: Homeland, Race, Language). The older members feel strongly attached to the club, and continue to participate in its activities even when they have ceased to take part in other formal social functions. They view it as an association of brotherhood built upon qualities and customs existing *only* in the Mexican culture.

In April, 1967, Club Mexico Bello had forty-three male members and their families, over one hundred people. Eleven of the forty-three were either doctors or dentists; the remainder represented a variety of occupations, from self-employed businessmen to salesmen. The mayor of Houston is an honorary member who occasionally participates in the club's activities.

The organization contains two auxiliary clubs: Club Feminino Mexico Bello, for members' wives, and the Girls' Mexico Bello Auxiliary Club, for single girls fifteen years and over. The girls' club sponsors dances, athletic activities, and Mexican food concessions at city-wide celebrations and bazaars. The club sponsors charitable, civic, and recreational functions yearly. The major social affair is the annual Baile de Gala, Blanco y Negro (Black and White Gala Ball), held at one of the finer hotels in Houston. Those attending are attired in formal black and white. Speeches are delivered summarizing and praising the organization's efforts to promote traditional Mexican customs during the past year.

A major traditionalist concern is the preservation of the family as a closely-knit, male-dominated unit in which loyalty to the family takes precedence over personal ambition and desires. Samora and Lamanna have commented on the durability of the Mexican-American family (1967:37):

> The Mexican-American family . . . has held up quite well under the impact of urbanization, industrialization, and acculturation. It still constitutes the major reservoir of the traditional culture and the major link with the mother country. It also constitutes the major focus of conflict between the old and the new, between the Mexican heritage and the American experience, between the traditional family structure and the demands of an urban industrial social system. Thus, the family has done well in maintaining the continuity with the past in the face of massive social change.

The explicit purpose of several Mexican-American clubs is the strengthening and preservation of familial and fictive kinship ties. For example, Club Familias Unidas emphasizes family togetherness by sponsoring social activities for the entire family. Founded in 1959 by families concerned with creating a good *"ambiente"* (atmosphere) for their children, its motto is, "For the Progress and Culture of our Youth." Club meetings are conducted exclusively in Spanish. New members are admitted only by majority vote; nonmembers may attend social activities only if a member vouches for their "good character." Each family must pay monthly dues, and admissions to dances may cost as much as $15.00 a couple. The social events of Familias Unidas include many Anglo holidays; the club organizes a Valentine's Day Dance, a Mother's Day Dance, a Father's Day Banquet, and an Easter picnic for the children. Mexican Independence Day is celebrated with a ball held at an expensive hotel.

Club Los Compadres, organized in 1964, admits no more than thirty-four members (sixteen couples); their ages range from forty to seventy years. They come from the older, more established families in Houston. Twenty-two are or have been members of the Club Familias Unidas. Many belong to Mexico Bello or the Sociedad Mutualistica Obrera Mexicana. Unlike other clubs, Club Los Compadres is small and intimate; it resulted from a discussion held at a family reunion celebrating a wedding anniversary. There are only two social functions each year. In the summer, an all-day picnic

is held in one of the city parks; members may donate a small gift to be raffled off in order to pay for the Mexican or other kind of pastry served throughout the day. The picnickers play card games and circulate socially, exchanging food, drink, jokes, and stories. Each member may bring a maximum of five guests. The atmosphere is described as that of an intimate family reunion. On December 24, a raffle is held at one of Houston's country clubs to assign each male member of Los Compadres his comadre for the coming year. On January 6, a formal dance celebrating El Dia de los Compadres is held; this day is the traditional Dia de los Reyes in Mexico—the Mexican equivalent of Christmas. Couples dance to records or a small combo. Each man presents a gift to his new comadre.

Conclusion

Organizations to perpetuate Mexican traditions are numerous in Houston. The expressed goal of many such associations is to assist fellow Mexican-Americans. These common-interest groups serve some of the same functions as the *compadrazgo* system in Mexico, a system of fictive kin ties between persons of equal status (who refer to each other as compadres and comadres) involving rights and obligations in mutual aid. To some extent *compadrazgo* persists among the poor of Houston who receive little aid from the government or the church; real and fictive kin are important sources of economic and emotional security, as was illustrated in the chapter on El Barrio. Among people who participate more in the economic mainstream of society, and who belong to a number of common-interest associations, extended kin and fictive kin ties are weakened because many of these former functions are removed. In Club Los Compadres emotional expression and family solidarity are encouraged, but the economic function usually associated with *compadrazgo* is diminished.

Traditional organizations also provide a social environment in which persons of low social standing in the Anglo-dominated society can assume higher status. Strongly-bounded organizations which were closed to Anglos and which placed high value on uniquely Mexican customs, traits, and activities, were created by refugees from Mexico's decade of multiple revolutions. The life-style of such persons is unique; the breed is dying out.

Life History of a Traditionalist

One such person is Antonio Gonzalez, who helped to found Mexico Bello. He was born in a border town when his parents were temporarily prevented from returning to Mexico by a flash flood in the Rio Grande. His father was a *comerciante,* or merchant, who traveled extensively along the border. Antonio spent most of his childhood in the state of Coahuila, Mexico.

His father was born and reared in Coahuila and married a girl from a nearby village. They had more than twenty children and today Antonio's relatives are scattered throughout the state.

Antonio completed *la primaria,* the first six years of school in the Mexican educational system. When Antonio was fourteen, the family moved to Houston to escape the revolution, and his schooling ended. He worked as a welder for his father and eventually as supervisor of an ice plant. For some years Antonio managed his own tailoring shop, until the long hours threatened his health. He then worked for more than twenty years as an employee in another tailoring business.

The Gonzalez family spent their first three years in Houston in a "dangerous and violent" neighborhood, but then moved to El Barrio. Few Mexicans lived there during the 1920's; the residents were largely Jewish or Italian. Antonio married the daughter of a family that had just moved to El Barrio from a border city in West Texas. They maintain a neat, comfortable home, and have no intentions of moving elsewhere.

Shortly after settling in El Barrio, Antonio attempted to rent a respectable place to hold a September 16 celebration, but he was told that "Mexicans aren't sophisticated enough to hold dances in any decent place—they'll probably tear the place up." He remembers his overwhelming desire to show the Anglo community that Mexicans were as cultured and sophisticated as they. He contacted a number of respectable citizens of Mexican ancestry and together they founded Club Mexico Bello. "Its members were selectively chosen. Questionnaires were sent out to select people of good character. They didn't necessarily have to be someone who was wealthy, but we did require a 'clean record.' "

Eventually the manager of the Rice Hotel agreed to rent them a ballroom on a trial basis.

> When the first dance was held at the Rice Hotel, the Anglos were astonished to see the Mexicans all dressed up in tuxedos and going through all the pageantry of presenting queens, debutantes, and the whole works. From that time on, no respectable Mexican club has had trouble obtaining the Rice Ballroom or any other place for dances. We really showed the Anglos that Mexicans were cultured. It did much to improve the image of the Mexican in the eyes of the Anglo and although today this is taken for granted, we had to come a long way to reach this stage.

To Antonio, the functions of Club Mexico Bello have changed little since their inception. "Our original purpose of preserving our customs and traditions still stands. But even today we have an image to maintain in the eyes of the Anglo. We must present the best possible image."

Antonio has witnessed the gradual development of Houston's Mexican-American community. He has been involved with many social and civic organizations—LULAC, Mexico Bello, Port of Houston Lions Club, the Masons—through which he has fought discrimination and has helped establish mutual aid organizations for Mexican-Americans. He believes that Mexican-Americans should vote in political elections as a bloc: "We must unite in order to be strong." However, he is somewhat distrustful of self-

named "leaders" of the Mexican-American community. "Many are just trying to better themselves politically and further their own ambitions."

Now in his mid-sixties, Antonio participates in fewer social and civic activities. He still attends the functions of Club Mexico Bello and LULAC. "LULAC is for social purposes, but maintaining connections with the members is necessary because you never know when you might need their help. This is my 'protection.' "

Antonio, like most traditionalists, feels it absolutely necessary to be able to read, write, and speak both English and Spanish. "I read the *Houston Post* daily. I also subscribe to a daily Spanish-language newspaper—*El Norte de Monterrey.* Besides, I read both *El Sol* and *El Latino Observatorio* [weekly newspapers written in both Spanish and English]. This way I get both sides of the story."

Antonio's relatives attend mass regularly at Catholic churches scattered throughout the city's various Mexican-American neighborhoods. Antonio feels that "The church is necessary for children and adults both. Religion is just like the law. Without law there is no authority or respect for others in society; without religion there is no sense of authority or respect in a child. And believe me, a child needs it."

Antonio plans to return to Mexico when he retires. Over the years, he has maintained close contact with his many relatives there, traveling to visit them about once a year. Many traditionalists, in anticipation of their return to Mexico, refuse to become United States citizens. Antonio, American by birth, says that before Lazaro Cardenas became president of Mexico, the school taught that:

> You should never renounce your Mexican citizenship and heritage; the idea was that once a Mexican, always a Mexican. If you did give up your citizenship it would be like spitting and stepping on the Mexican flag. When President Lazaro Cardenas came into power he advocated that any Mexican who went to another country should become a citizen of that country without feeling any guilt about it. You will do more justice by becoming a good citizen of any country you decide to live in by acculturating. This is the only way Mexicans living in other countries will get anywhere. It will be to their advantage to become American citizens and learn the language. That way they will learn the laws and protect themselves without having to take injustices needlessly or complain about them unnecessarily.

Unlike other traditionalists, Antonio did not attempt to impose traditional values on his children. "I think too many Mexican families are doing wrong in trying to keep their sons and daughters at home as long as possible. It is very foolish to do this. A boy should lead his own life and make decisions for himself. His parents are not going to live his life for him, so the sooner he gets out in the world the better." Antonio's daughter has graduated from college and his son is presently a junior in college. Antonio says he will pay for his son's education as long as he is financially able.

Today, at sixty-one, Antonio Gonzalez is articulate in both English and Spanish. His formal education is minimal; his financial attainment is modest, but comfortable. He is respected by his children and by members of the Mexican-American community, and looks forward to returning to Mexico, which has always remained his mother country in sentiment.

CHAPTER VI

THE MIDDLE CLASS

The third social category to be discussed here, the middle class, represents the most "Anglicized" segment of the Mexican-American community in Houston. It includes professionals, owners of modest or large businesses, white collar workers in positions of authority, government employees, clerks, small-scale merchants, and skilled laborers. This thin layer of "brown affluence" has gained access to the educational and economic institutions of Anglo society; as a group it represents the maximum of integration into the society at large.

Most members of the Spanish-surnamed middle class consider themselves Americans of Mexican ancestry and prefer to be called "Mexican-American" as opposed to "Spanish-American" or "Latin-American." English is the preferred language and only a few acknowledge their ability to read and write Spanish as fluently as English. Ethnic endogamy is still the rule, but marriage with Anglos is neither unusual nor so difficult that it is strongly opposed. Family structure is less authoritarian and less male-dominated; husband and wife together usually make major family decisions. Education is highly valued; children, especially males, are expected to attend college. The Mexican-American middle class is largely distinguished from the other two social categories by attitudes and behavior similar to those prescribed by the dominant Anglo culture.

Middle-Class Organizations

The present investigation of the Mexican-American middle class and its efforts to achieve economic, political, and educational parity with the dominant society is based primarily upon the study of middle-class organizations.

As noted earlier, the Mexican-American community in Houston supports numerous civic, religious, social, mutual aid, recreational, political, and fraternal associations. Organizations such as Familias Unidas and Club Verde Mar (described in the preceding chapter) are primarily social clubs explicitly designed to strengthen and promote Mexican culture. Others, such as PASO, UOIC, and LULAC, are more civically and politically oriented; their membership is predominantly middle-class. Of all the Mexican-

American organizations, LULAC is probably the best known to the Anglo community. Several LULAC councils, operating independently of one another, exist within the city.

The history of Mexican-American organizations is one of fragmentation, disunity, and infighting (cf. Guerra, 1969), partly due to Mexican-American "personalism" and to differences in socioeconomic status and acculturation. In recent years, well-educated, better-trained leaders have emerged, and organizations have dealt more effectively with a variety of problems. In Houston, for example, groups have cooperatively attempted to solve educational problems such as the Mexican-American high drop-out rate, bilingualism, and the lack of adequate counseling services. On a national level, the grape boycott led by Caesar Chavez has won wide support. In Texas the Valley farm march united Mexican-Americans from throughout the state in allied action.

Recent surveys (Garcia, 1968; Guerra, 1969) indicate that PASO, UOIC, and LULAC are the three major Mexican-American organizations. Each has, on some occasion, attempted to assume spokesmanship for the Mexican-American community only to encounter opposition from other organizations. In the following pages, these three associations are briefly described.

League of United Latin-American Citizens (LULAC)

Founded in 1933, LULAC is one of the oldest Mexican-American organizations in the United States. Usually stigmatized as a social club for acculturated, middle-class Mexican-Americans who have no contact with the "grass roots" segment of the population, LULAC has nonetheless provided extensive aid to less fortunate Mexican-Americans. It is largely involved in educational projects, civil rights suits protesting discrimination against Mexican-Americans, and recreational activities. LULAC publishes a national newsletter and awards college scholarships to Mexican-American students. It attempts to remain nonpartisan, although some members feel that LULAC should take a more militant position in civil rights issues. The Black civil rights movement provides a constant stimulus and source of comparison.[1]

Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations (PASO)

The major political organization for Mexican-Americans in Harris County is PASO. A liberal organization with 100 official members in 1967, it grew out of the VIVA Kennedy Clubs formed to campaign for John F. Kennedy

1. A former president of LULAC addressed a convention held by the organization in 1968 with these words: "The Black people of this country are setting the example for us to follow—us, who have been here since before the coming of Christ. . . . I am not condoning violence, but we should stand up for those who are bleeding" (*The Houston Chronicle*, July 1, 1968).

in 1960. Unlike its sister PASO chapters throughout Texas, the Houston Chapter has always been strong. According to its bylaws and constitution, PASO seeks to improve through political action the educational, economic, and civic opportunities of Mexican-Americans. It is a member of the Harris County Democrats—a liberal coalition of Negroes, Mexican-Americans, white liberals, the Teamsters Union, and the AFL-CIO. PASO sometimes co-sponsors activities with the Houston County Democrats to defray operating costs. In Anglo-governed Crystal City, Texas (with an 85:15 ratio of Mexican-Americans to Anglos), PASO joined with the Teamsters to elect Mexican-American city councilmen and mayor. PASO also supported the Rio Grande farm workers' strike and the subsequent march to Austin. The organization sponsors annual voter-registration drives throughout the state—especially in large urban areas—holds state-wide conventions, and endorses candidates for a variety of public offices during election years. PASO is an important force in mobilizing Mexican-American voters. However, because it is considered a liberal organization, PASO appeals to few conservative Mexican-Americans, many of whom believe that Mexican-Americans should be integrated into Anglo society, not self-segregated in ethnic organizations.

United Organization Information Center (UOIC)

The UOIC was created in 1963 with the express purpose of collecting, preparing, and disseminating information of interest to the Mexican-American community. Its bimonthly meetings ideally are attended by representatives from thirty-seven organizations; in fact, only a few come regularly. Many UOIC members are lawyers. The organization also seeks to encourage new leadership and in general to stimulate interest in and support of the Mexican-American.

Although originally conceived as an organization of organizations, UOIC has itself become a specific pressure group. For example, it has undertaken projects concerning Mexican-American employment and education; it also has campaigned for the distribution of a "fair share" of the funds available for poverty programs to Mexican-American neighborhoods.

UOIC frequently employs the phrase *Raza Unida* (United Race), now widely-used as a symbol of unification of Americans of Mexican ancestry. UOIC sponsored one of the annual *Raza Unida* conferences held in the last three years; several hundred people from throughout the state and many of the local Mexican-American organizations participated.

Life Styles of Middle Class Mexican-Americans

As noted earlier, the middle class represents the most "Anglicized" segment of Houston's Mexican-American population, as indicated by their predominant use of English, their aspirations and goals for themselves and their children, their emphasis upon the value of education, and their faith in

the political system and other American institutions.

Many express impatience with the Mexican immigrant who clings to his native language and customs. As one informant remarked, "It's time they quit waving the Mexican flag . . . if they want to upgrade their standard of living. This total 'Mexican bit' does nothing but make it hard for their children."

However, this attitude appears to be changing, as what one attorney labels the "Mexicanization of the Anglo" proceeds. The Mexican traditions of the close-knit family and warm interpersonal relations are emulated by Anglos and preserved by many middle-class Mexican-Americans. Several organizations are campaigning for bilingual classes and bilingual teachers conversant with both Mexican and Anglo culture.

When questioned about discrimination, informants often denied having encountered overt prejudice; they reported discriminatory incidents from childhood and adolescence, frequently linking these events with socioeconomic status (e.g., "the poor are always discriminated against"). Others described subtle and covert discrimination such as what one attorney called the "deliberate and systematic elimination" of Mexican-Americans from juries. Another informant referred to Mexican-Americans as "tolerated people."

> Discrimination against Mexican-Americans is hard to see and even harder to prove. For years we have been able to eat in any restaurant in Houston, sit anywhere on the bus. We're the 'tolerated people,' more or less. But when it comes to buying a home or renting an apartment in certain areas of town, discrimination is more apparent. But you have to consider that until a few years ago few Mexican-Americans could afford to live in the better areas of the city. I suspect that many people are willing to tolerate a Mexican or two in their neighborhood instead of a Negro. Because of all the hell the Negro has been raising, we're tolerated a little more. That's why I feel that discrimination against us is more vicious.

A businessman described the superiority-inferiority relationship often obtaining in encounters between Anglos and Mexican-Americans such as those that occur on a public beach. "You don't know what it's like to go to the beach with your family and know that you have just as much right to be there as anyone else, and at the same time know that some of those people look down on you and don't think you should be there. You just can't imagine always having this feeling with you. You would be surprised at what the ordinary Mexican-American feels against the Anglo."

In this context, the "fierce pride" usually claimed by persons of Mexican ancestry is perhaps better understood as identification with the reputation of pride. A college graduate who works for the city and whose family has no ties with Mexico recalls:

> I was born and raised in an all-Mexican neighborhood and I was sensitive to the all-white

> world just beyond my neighborhood ever since I was a kid. To know that there is a world out there that considers you different is an overwhelming feeling. So when I used to hear that Mexicans had a lot of pride, I felt good. I was proud of the fact that they had pride.

Black-Brown Relations

Research on ethnic relations usually concerns dominant-subordinate relationships rather than relations between subordinate ethnic groups. The chapter on El Barrio noted the friction between Negroes and Mexican-Americans of low socioeconomic standing. Friction is also apparent between middle-class Blacks and Browns.

Some of this antagonism may be traced to competition for jobs in government-sponsored poverty programs. Many Mexican-Americans consider their long history of residence in Texas a prior claim to federal aid. A Mexican-American attorney, addressing Anglo businessmen, remarked:

> National attention has been focused on the Blacks, and rightly so. They are the largest minority group in the United States. But in the Southwest and especially in Texas, the attention should be focused on the Spanish-speaking—the Mexican-Americans. Eighty per cent of our population resides in the Southwest, and in most instances the problems of this large group are the same as those found within the Black population. But in our situation the problems are compounded because of the language barrier. . . . It's time that people such as yourselves begin to realize that the largest minority group in Texas is not Black but Brown. And we were here long before anyone else, Black or White. It's time we were discovered.

The chief administrator of the major poverty program in Houston is Black; only after pressure from several Mexican-American organizations was a Mexican-American placed in a high-ranking position. Many interpreted this situation as evidence that the Mexican-American population is largely ignored by the government. Browns and Blacks watch each other carefully, in fear that one group will grab a larger slice of the federal pie. Such guarded hostility is countered by attempts at coalition in order to preclude the local power structure's exploitation of antagonism between the two groups. PASO, for example, is a member of the Harris County Democrats, which also includes various Black organizations. The Day Care Association and the Harris County Chapter of the Council on Human Relations are other organizations in which both Negroes and Mexican-Americans participate.

Conflict between the two groups may also result from the fact that a number of channels open to Mexican-Americans are closed to Blacks. Many Mexican-Americans consider themselves Caucasian, and some believe in the Negro's inferiority. Poverty, poor housing, and substandard education are common to both groups, but often the barriers dividing the Mexican-Americans from Anglo society are couched in cultural rather than racial terms: the language barrier, a different family structure, and so on. Refer-

ence to a "united race" may reflect a change in self-consciousness, or in strategy.

Leadership

Three types of middle-class leadership may be distinguished within the Mexican-American community: 1) area leaders who speak for their area's Mexican-American residency; 2) persons occupying official positions of leadership in the numerous Mexican-American organizations; and 3) individuals achieving status and influence within the Anglo power structure, for example, as state representatives.

Such leaders have made various attempts to organize and initiate drives for the betterment of the Mexican-American population. Personalistic politics and mistrust of motives hinder such attempts. No single individual is recognized as spokesman for the Mexican-American community.

Those who are successful in Anglo spheres of influence generally express the belief that mobility is attainable, and they actively help others to achieve; yet they are also neutralized as effective leaders for anyone who has achieved success in the Anglo world is suspect and vulnerable to the stigma "sell-out." The more recognition a Mexican-American leader gains from Anglos, the less he receives from his own ethnic group which believes he has denied his Mexican heritage to achieve economic and social success. A Mexican-American leader ends in the awkward position of relying upon Anglos for support and power since he speaks for Mexican-Americans who distrust him. If he achieves positive change in the Mexican-American community through the Anglo power structure he loses much of his effectiveness. There is no apparent solution to this dilemma. More research (cf. Garcia, 1968) is needed on the roles played by and available to the leaders of minority groups.

Family Structure

Traditionally the Mexican family is a close-knit unit. Loyalty to the family takes precedence over personal desire and ambition, and competition between family members is taboo. Within Mexican-American middle-class families, in contrast, children are encouraged to pursue personal interests, to attend college, and to excel in everything, even though they may thus surpass their parents. An attorney who also owns a small business expects all his children to attend college. He encourages their competition by declaring his smartest child will inherit his business. Another lawyer reported that his parents always urged him to "do better than they did."

> My father used to own an auto repair shop. I remember one evening it was late, and I was holding a flashlight so Daddy could see a part he was working on. I was all greasy and it was hot. My Daddy looked at me and said, "Well, do you want to do this all your life?" I said, "No, Daddy," and he said, "Well, in that case get yourself a college education and make something of yourself."

The strict child-disciplining traditionally associated with Mexican families is absent in many Mexican-American middle-class families. Some parents still believe that "children should be seen and not heard," but most admit that their children are less strictly disciplined than they were. Several stated that they did not accept the distant, stern, silent role ideally played by the father in traditional Mexican families. They prefer to be a friend, rather than an uncompromising authoritarian figure, to their children.

One obvious change in parents' attitudes in Mexican-American middle-class families is in their attitude toward dating. Traditionally, daughters were not allowed to date; courting took place under the watchful eye of a chaperone. In contrast, middle-class girls are free of this restriction and may even date Anglos. One informant commented, "In a few decades there won't be any more Mexicans. In my own family several sons have married gringos, and my own daughter is going to marry an Anglo."

The children of middle-class families are encouraged to speak English; they often show little interest in learning Spanish. In one family, whether the children should speak Spanish became a source of conflict between the husband, who openly advocates Mexican customs, and the wife, who grew up in an Anglo neighborhood and actively resists "all matters Mexican." The husband explained that his wife was "fifth generation Mexican-American. She understands Spanish but she won't speak it to me, and none of the kids speak it. The oldest daughter is now taking it in high school, but she doesn't speak it at home."

In another family, the father one evening called to his son, "*Ven por aca* (come here)," and the son replied, "I don't know what you're saying." The mother scolded the boy, "You should understand what your father says," but the father hushed her—"Leave him alone, he's doing all right." Still another family prefers that their children learn Spanish. "We encourage them to speak it because we don't want them to lose it. Their Spanish is very poor. We speak it a little bit but not much."

The traditional Mexican-American family is patriarchal. The male head of the household wields unquestioned authority; the wife and other female members of the family are submissive, quiet, and modest, even though they may subtly circumvent the edicts of the household head. Sex roles are strictly segregated; males never perform domestic duties.

In some middle-class families, the traditional relationship between husband and wife persists. One man forbids his wife to leave the house alone, even for church activities.

> My wife started going to this little Baptist Mission close to our house. They started having evening services and she wanted to go. I won't let her go out at night by herself—I'm very Mexican about this. She even got the minister to come over and talk to me, but I explained how I felt and he had to go along with me. As long as she's my wife I'm going to keep her in a position of respect. It's not love, because she could get a divorce

tomorrow and I wouldn't care; but as long as she's my wife, she has to act the part with dignity and honor.

In general, however, the husband-wife relationship in middle-class families is more egalitarian than authoritarian. Major decisions are made by both husband and wife. Husbands of wives who work do not feel threatened; some wives believe their primary responsibility is homemaking but do not feel that it is imposed on them by Mexican custom and tradition. Many couples stated that theirs was not a "typical Mexican" relationship.

Acculturation of the Middle Class

The group defined above as "middle class" represents the most acculturated segment of the Mexican-American population in Houston. However, the present investigation excluded owners of restaurants, bakeries, tortilla factories, flower shops, funeral parlors, grocery stores, and so on located in predominantly Mexican-American areas of the city and entirely dependent economically upon the Mexican-American population. The life styles of such businessmen and their families would probably contrast sharply with those of the middle-class Mexican-Americans described in the preceding pages.

In discussing acculturation a distinction must be made between changes in an individual's life style and changes in the culture characteristic of a group. Whereas an individual may be able to move effectively in Anglo-dominated circles, the larger group to which he belongs may not; or the converse may hold.

Lamanna and Samora (1967) distinguish between cultural and structural integration. "Cultural" in this sense refers to attitudes and behavior; cultural integration occurs when members of an ethnic group assume life styles and attitudes characteristic of the dominant group. Structural integration refers to the integration of an ethnic group into the institutions of the dominant society. The Mexican-American middle class as a whole is characterized more by cultural than by structural integration. Attitudes, beliefs, and behavior of middle-class Mexican-Americans are similar to those of the Anglo middle class, but participation in Anglo-dominated institutions, especially educational and economic institutions, is minimal.

Conclusions

The middle class is distinguished from the two other major social categories—the poor and the traditionalists—in several ways. They are the most Anglicized segment of the Mexican-American population and, like their Anglo counterparts, they exhibit a higher degree of participation in social, civic, and political organizations. Without denying their cultural heritage, many middle-class Mexican-Americans shun traditional Mexican customs. This characteristic alone sets them apart from the traditionalists.

Although specific behavior patterns and attitudes of the middle class

have been outlined, this does not imply that all middle-class Mexican-Americans possess the same characteristics. Their marginality to both Anglo and Mexican-American groups increases the difficulty of classifying them in a specific category or social class. Of the three social classes described, the middle class is by far the most diverse. For example, it runs a wide range in degree; numerous members of the middle class participate in no organizations whereas others belong to many. Diversity in political attitudes and beliefs is a contributing factor to the conflict within the Mexican-American political arena. The middle class cannot be described as liberal, since many possess strong conservative tendencies and make such statements as "If I made it, so can they."

Despite the difficulty in describing the Mexican-American middle class, one factor remains constant: this class plays, and will continue to play, a prominent role in many aspects of Mexican-American community life. Many of the middle class are involved in community and civic activities designed to assist less fortunate Mexican-Americans. Youth organizations throughout the city have pressured many of the middle class into greater activity and definite stands on important issues. The relationship between the middle class and the youth movement will to a large extent determine the future course of events in the Mexican-American community of Houston.

APPENDIX

TABLES AND FIGURES

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TABLE 1

POPULATION OF HOUSTON SMSA

	1950		1960		1965 (est.)*	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Houston**	807,000	100.0	1,243,000	100.0	1,486,000	100.0
Spanish Surname	40,000	4.9	75,000	6.0	106,000	7.1

*Houston Chamber of Commerce (1966), p. 1.

**Figures for "Total Houston" include the Spanish surname population as well as all other population segments.

TABLE 2

AVERAGE ANNUAL NET MIGRATION INTO HOUSTON*

	1950-1960		1960-1965 (est.)		1965-1970 (est.)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	18,000	100.0	23,000	100.0	25,000	100
Negro	3,000	16.6	5,000	21.7	5,500	22
Spanish surname	2,000	11.1	3,000	13.0	3,500	14

*Houston Planning Department, p. A5.

TABLE 3

DEPENDENCY RATIOS

	1960	1965 (est.)
Total Houston	426	400
Spanish surname	546	575

TABLE 4

AGE GROUP PERCENTAGES (1960)

Age Group	Total Houston Percentage	Spanish surname Percentage
0 - 4	13	17
5 - 9	11	15
10 - 14	9	12
15 - 19	6	8
20 - 24	7	7
25 - 29	7	8
30 - 34	8	8
35 - 39	8	7
40 - 44	7	4
45 - 49	6	3
50 - 54	5	3
55 - 59	4	3
60 - 64	5	2
65 plus	5	3
	101	100

TABLE 5
MEDIAN ANNUAL INCOME OF FAMILIES

	1959	1964 (est.)
Total Houston	$6040	$6700
Spanish surname	4339	5350
Negro	3426	4400

TABLE 6
INCOME DISTRIBUTIONS (1960)

Family Income	Total Houston Percentage	Spanish surname Percentage	Negro Percentage
$ 0 - 599	5	6	11
1000 - 1999	6	9	14
2000 - 2999	7	14	17
3000 - 3999	9	17	19
4000 - 4999	11	16	14
5000 - 5999	12	14	10
6000 - 6999	11	8	6
7000 - 7999	9	6	4
8000 - 8999	7	4	2
9000 - 9999	5	2	1
10000 and over	18	5	3
	100	101	101

TABLE 7
PERCENTAGE OF UNEMPLOYED MALES IN THE LABOR FORCE

	1950	1960	1965 (est.)
Total Houston	3.3	4.2	4.0
Spanish surname	6.9	5.6	4.8

TABLE 8
PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN (14 AND OVER) IN THE LABOR FORCE

	1950	1960	1965 (est.)
Total Houston	35	38	40
Spanish surname	23	28	31

TABLE 9
MEDIAN YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED
(PERSONS 25 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER)

	1950	1960	1965 (est.)
Anglo	11.4	12.1	12.5
Negro	7.6	8.8	9.5
Spanish surname	5.2	6.4	7.2

TABLE 10

HOUSTON HOUSING STANDARDS (1960)

	Total Houston	Spanish surname
Occupied Units	282,626	13,965
% Owner Occupied	60	47
% Renter Occupied	40	53
Median Number of Rooms per Unit	4.8	4.3
Median Number of Persons per Unit	2.9	4.3
% with 1.01 or more Persons per Room	11	39
Condition of Dwelling		
% Sound	84	69
% Deteriorating	13	25
% Dilapidated	3	6
Median Value of Owned Unit	$ 10,900	$ 7,300
Median Rent per Month of Rented Unit	$ 58	$ 53

TABLE 11

HOUSING COMPARISON (1960)

	Spanish Surname of Census Tract 7-A	Total Population of Census Tract 21 (85% Anglo)
Median Family Income	$ 4,809	$ 4,925
Total Occupied Units	436	2,160
% Owner Occupied	76	40
% Renter Occupied	24	60
Median Number Rooms per Unit	4.4	4.0
Median Number Persons per Unit	4.7	2.3
% 1.01 or More Persons per Room	41	14
% Sound Units	81	80
% Deteriorated Units	16	17
% Dilapidated Units	3	2
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units	$ 6,900	$ 7,600
Median Rent per Month	$ 41	$ 59

TABLE 12

DISSIMILARITY INDEX SCORES (1965)

Anglo vs. All Others	Spanish Surname vs. Anglo	Negro vs. Anglo	Spanish Surname vs. Negro
73.2	65.2	81.2	70.9

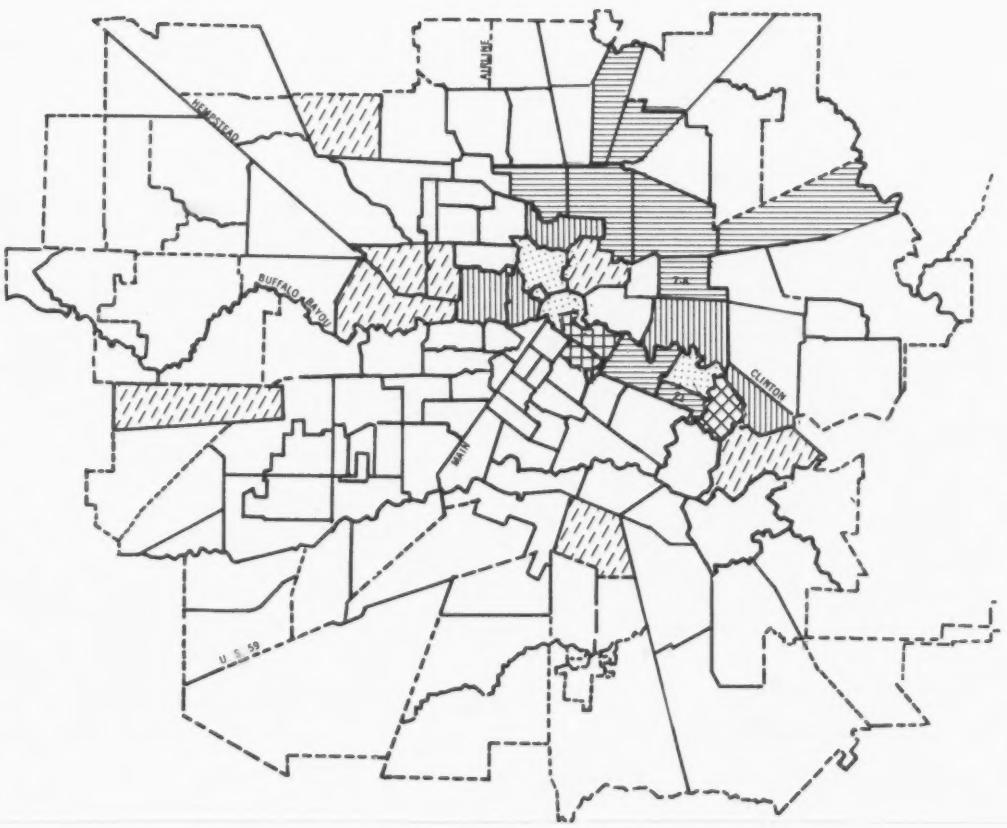

FIGURE 1
PERCENTAGE OF SPANISH SURNAME BY CENSUS TRACT

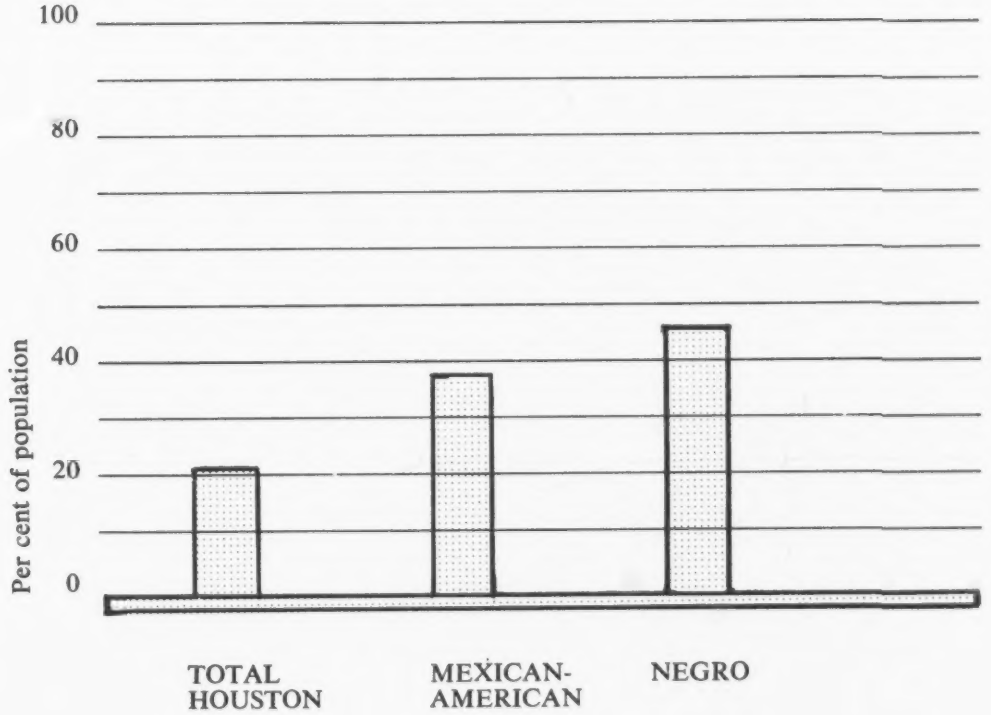

FIGURE 2

COMPARATIVE POVERTY LEVELS (1965 EST.)

FIGURE 3
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME (1960 ESTIMATE)

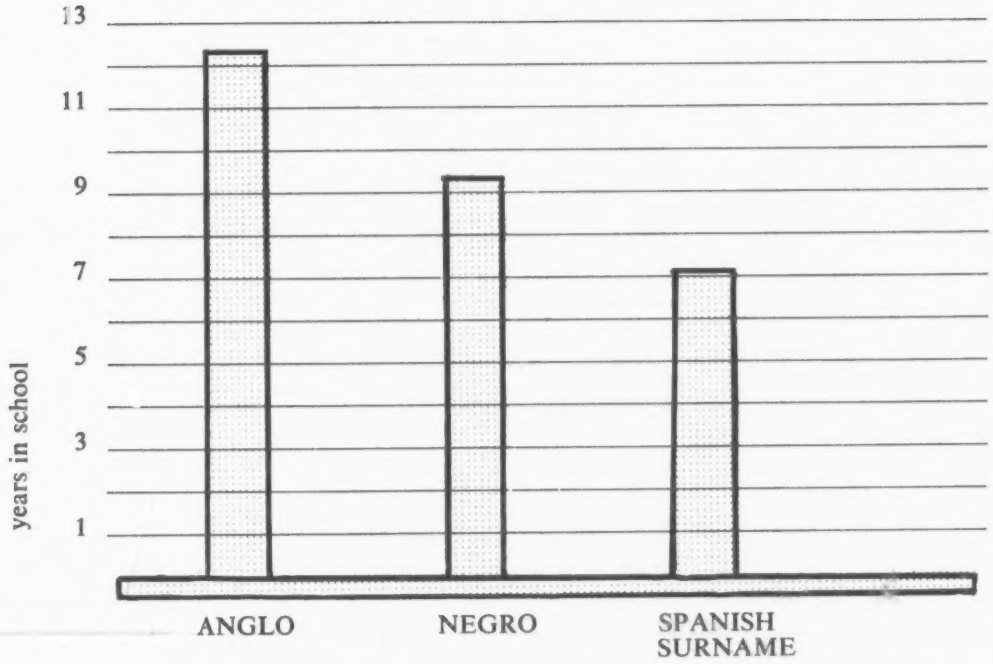

FIGURE 4

RELATIVE EDUCATION LEVELS

(1965 EST.)

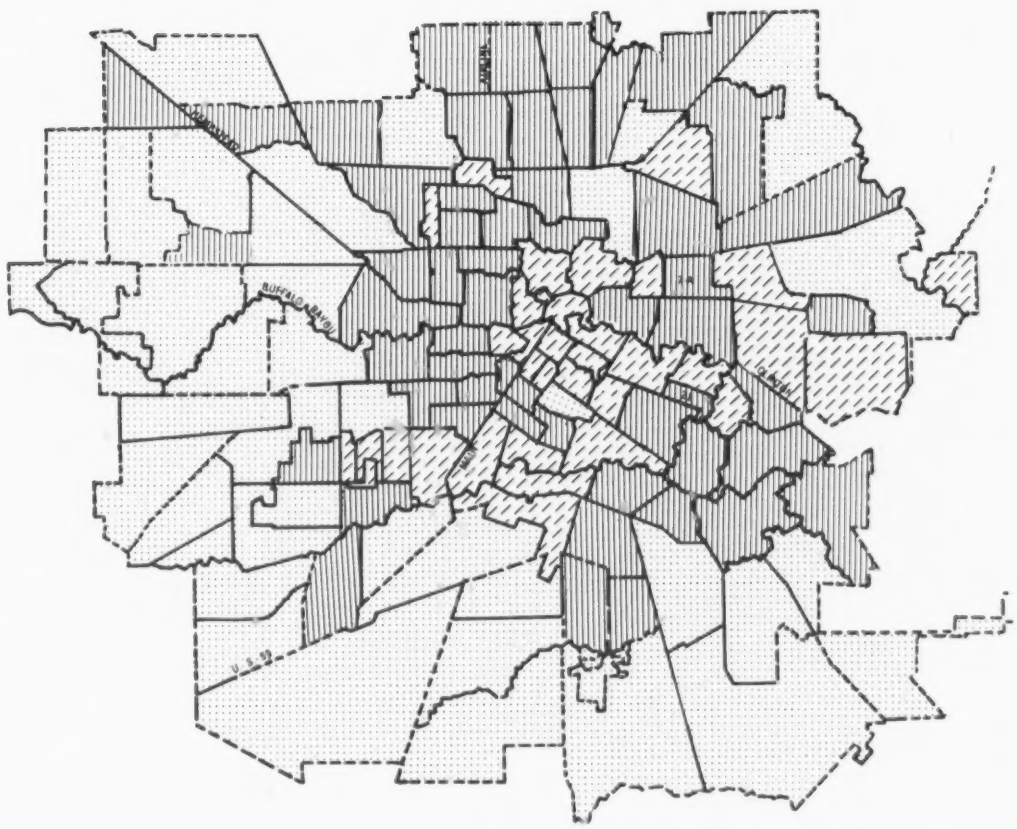

FIGURE 5
POPULATION CHANGE 1960-65
VARIATION FROM CITY AVG. GAIN OF 19.53%

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